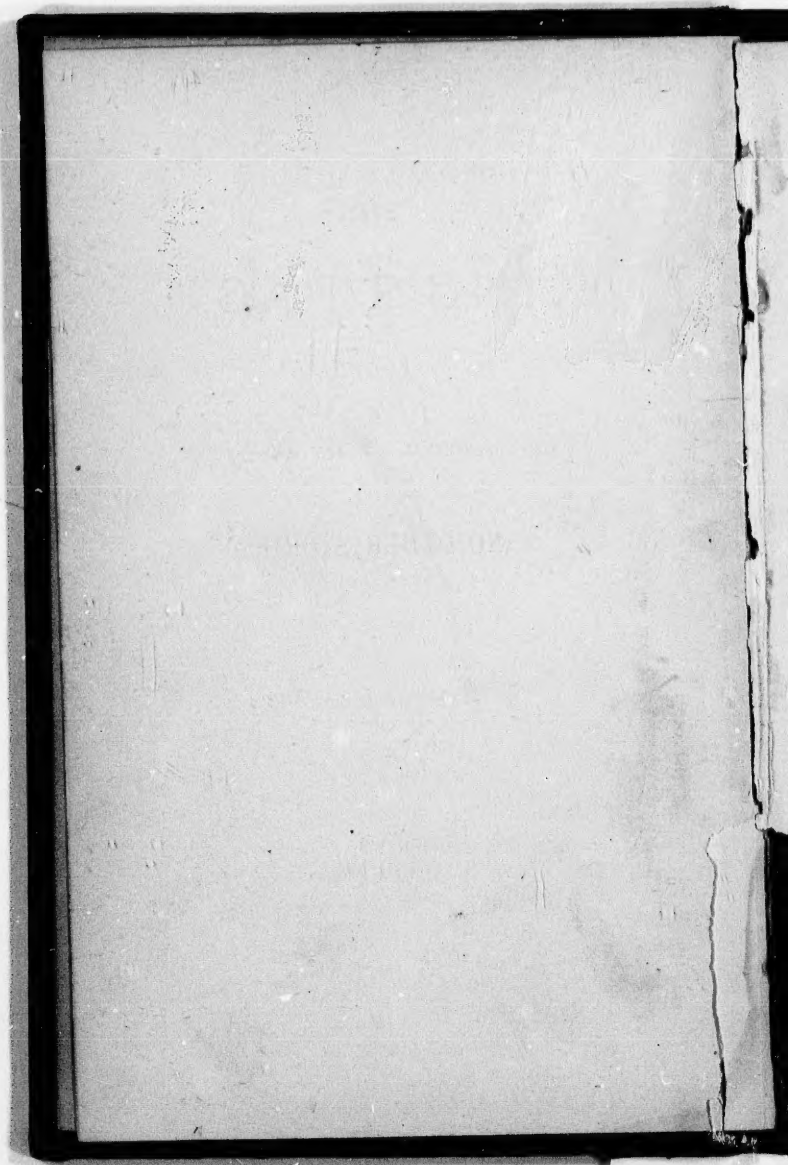




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THE
KING'S PAGE,

A LEGEND

OF

The Moorish Wars in Spain,

AND OTHER STORIES.

35
BY
✓
ANNA T. SADLIER.



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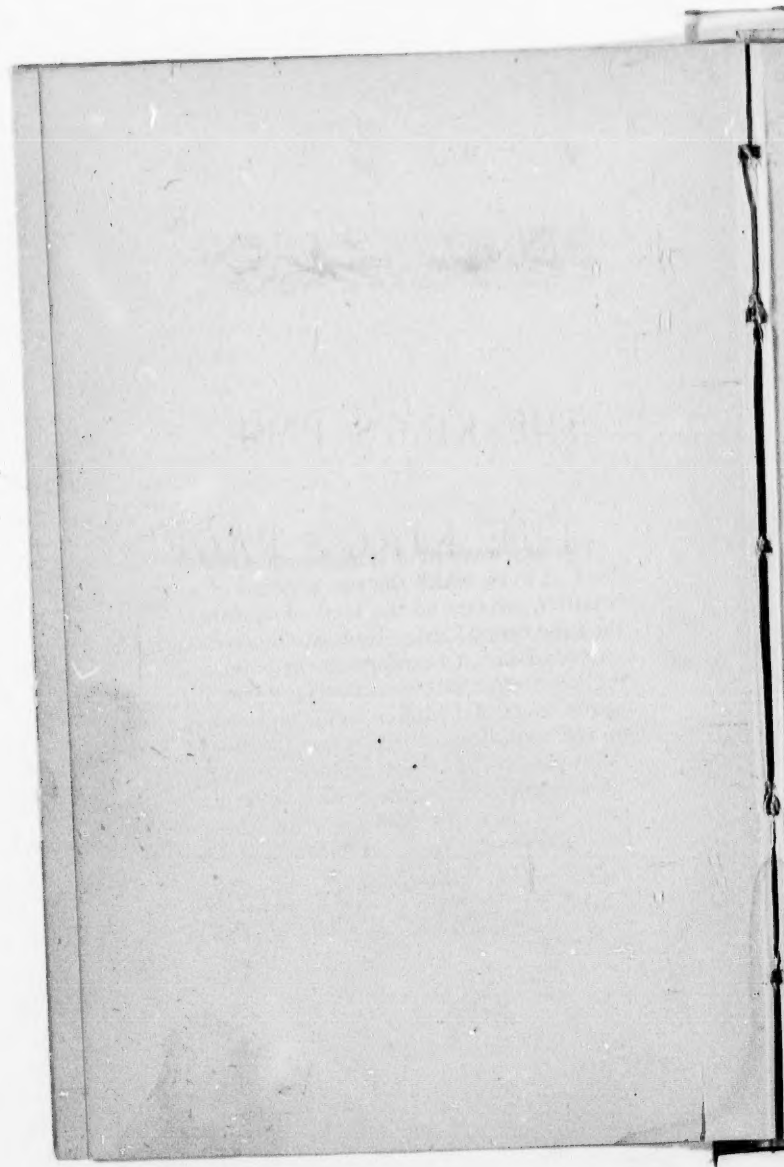
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THE KING'S PAGE.





THE KING'S PAGE.

THE sky was full of gorgeous and transcendent hues, which the sun, prodigal of its beauties, lavishes on the land of morning, the ruby-tinted East. Now, at the close of a tropical day, it transformed the gray and rugged Sierras into a radiant fairy-land of pearly tints and molten gold, and rested on the bold, decided outlines of the Torres Bermejas, or Vermilion Towers, standing out in sharp relief against the violet heavens. In one of the gardens of the Alhambra, overlooking the golden-hued Darro,

NOTE.—The facts concerning Del Pulgar's venture, De la Vega's heroic combat with the Moor, and the death of Tarfe were translated from the Spanish, and placed at our disposal through the kindness of a friend, and on these are founded the present sketch.

stood a Moorish maiden leaning upon the low wall which surrounded the enclosure, and, with veil thrown back, gazed out upon the landscape, breathing the balmy air which at length relieved the heat of day. The thick, dark leaves of a pomegranate-tree waved above her head, bending till their boughs encircled her face as with a garland; at her feet a flowering cactus, and near her, in gorgeous clusters, the rich, proud blossoms of the Eastern plants, among which, like a pale, sweet vision, the graceful lily upreared its slender stalk, and the gaudy tulip flaunted its rainbow tints, as if conscious of its finery. Thus surrounded, and with bright, glowing beauty of deep and vivid coloring, of warm and radiant lights, she might have been mistaken for Flora, the goddess of the morn, the fair guardian of the flowers. Yet a subtle melancholy was perceptible in her face, spite of the haughty, flashing eyes, unsoftened by any gleam of tenderness.

Hearing a step approach, she hastily concealed her face, nor raised her veil until a well-known voice addressed her:

"Zaida, my beloved, flower of the East,

it is thy lover who disturbs thy reverie. Wherefore did I note that shade of sadness on thy radiant face?"

"Alas! Tarfe, my thoughts were of my country's ruin. What if the ancient walls of fair Granada should ever shelter yonder infidel invaders, and the crescent of the Prophet give place to his usurping symbol?"

"Dispel such evil forebodings, light of my life," replied the Moor. "Never shall those accursed Christians vanquish the sons of Islam. Bethink thee how our fathers fought and died; and shall we prove recreant to the trust they left us?"

"Nay, but our race hath fallen, and no more shall Granada witness those ancient deeds of valor."

"Thou wrongest us, fair Zaida; we are ever ready to strike a daring blow in behalf of the country we love so well."

"Allah be praised!" she cried vehemently; "had I been but a man, yonder would I speed to the very tents of the unbelievers, and hurl defiance in their midst."

"And it shall be done, pearl of the East. Ere to-morrow's sun hath sunk to rest, thy

wish shall be accomplished inasmuch as it may be done in the person of thy lover. But I claim from thy fair hand a pledge of defiance which shall be left in the unbeliever's camp as token of my presence."

"Brave warrior, true son of Islam, receive from my hand this scarf I have worn, by which I declare to thee my interest in thy welfare."

He took the scarf of green tissue which she offered him, and pressed it to his lips with words of fervent gratitude.

"Behold our country!" she continued. "Beyond that deep and flowering ravine arises the dark fortress of the Albaycin; at its feet flows through vaulted bridges the warm-hued waters of the Darro; and yonder to our right like liquid silver winds the calm Xenil. O Tarfe! my beloved, behold our country, and deplore with me its downfall. Nerve thy heart with its beauty, and let the true believers combat in unison, that the infidel invader may never possess its mosques and towers."

"Fear not, dearest; never shall the unbelieving foe pollute with his miscreant

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tread the stronghold of our fathers, our
ancient citadel."

"Allah aid thy hand! But now it wear-
eth late, and I may not tarry longer. I
pine and die, O Tarfe! within these gor-
geous halls and incense-perfumed cham-
bers. My soul is made for freedom and a
proud and high career like thine, my war-
rior! I loathe the life I lead, and seem to
breathe indeed the air of slavery. Farewell,
beloved, the night approacheth!"

With tender words he left her to return
to the royal walls of the palace, whilst he
betook himself to prepare for the morrow's
task.

Night had withdrawn her legions, and
the morn, like a vanquished foe, raised her
pale face and smiled on the sleeping woods,
and plains, and mountains. The birds, the
feathered choristers, awoke and chanted
their early notes of praise, the trees shook
the dew like sleep from off their leaves,
and the flowers unfolded their dreamy,
odorous petals; the streams went murmur-
ing on, for even the tranquil night brings
them no rest, and they heeded not that
the opal Dawn had come out of the east,

and the black-robed Night had passed away with stately step, gathering her treasures, the golden, burning stars, and the cool zephyrs, and myriad clouds. It was day upon the Vega, and from out the Alcazar gate rode a warrior of stern and stately mien. His figure was strong and firmly knit; his height, it seemed, somewhat above the medium size. His visor was still raised and displayed the swarthy face and fierce, black eyes of Tarfe the Moor. Mounted on a noble steed, he rode with grave and determined air, till at length, when the morning sun was shining on the walls and battlements which surrounded the Christian camp, he gave rein to his horse, and urged it with whip and spur to its utmost speed. As he approached the Christian lines he could perceive that all were astir; pages and squires, polishing their masters' armor or sharpening their flashing swords, sat without the tent, regardless of the early sun.

Settling himself firmly in his saddle, he rode at full gallop within the lines, and with all his force hurled at the wooden pavilion which served as the dwelling of

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the Queen a dart to which was attached a scarf of greenish tissue. Then, wheeling around, he dashed from the camp with lightning speed. Scarce had he reached the plain when a hundred of the noblest knights sprang to their saddles and galloped forth in pursuit. They followed him to the very gates of the beleaguered city, but the Alcazar opened to receive him ere lance or sword could reach him. He scarcely slackened his steed till, pausing at one of the gates of the Alhambra, he threw his bridle to a page, and, dismounting, entered with proud and joyous step.

In a hall adorned with barbaric splendor, golden vessels of burning incense, costly carvings, and draperies of silk and cloth of gold, he found the princess reclining on a divan. Kneeling before her, he exclaimed:

"Beauteous Zaida, beloved of my heart, thy lover has returned, but thy token waves upon the pavilion of the unbeliever's Queen!"

"Worthy art thou," she answered with proud exultation, "that the daughter of a hundred kings should hail thee as her lover.

Thou, thou shalt uphold the failing fortunes of our race."

"Thy words, my Zaida, are to me as the nectar of the gods, as the songs of the dark-eyed houris. Unparelled art thou in beauty, as in undaunted courage and devotion to thy country. I may not utter all that gratitude and love would teach me. Bright are thine eyes as the glowing diamond, fair art thou as the queenly rose. O fairest of thy race! behold at thy feet Tarfe, thy slave and servant!"

"Say, rather, my true warrior, dear to my heart as the glory of our country. Illustrious art thou among the men of our race, and Zaida thanks thee for this noble proof of thy love."

Continuing thus to converse in the extravagant style of the East, they passed on to the presence of Boabdil, the last Moorish sovereign of Granada.

Prominent among the pursuers of Tarfe was Hernan Perez del Pulgar, popularly known as "Him of the mighty deeds," one of the bravest and noblest of the chivalry of Spain. Finding the pursuit vain, he presented himself before the king.

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"My liege," he said, bending the knee,
"our chase hath been unsuccessful; where-
fore I have come to crave from thee a
boon."

"Name it, sir knight; we know of no
boon which can be refused to 'Him of the
mighty deeds.'"

"My King, I ask the privilege of aveng-
ing, in the manner which shall seem to me
most fitting, this daring and audacious in-
sult."

"It shall be as thou wilt, Pulgar; but
bear in mind that Granada is still in the
hands of the infidels, and risk not thy life
in rash encounters. We have need of arms
like thine."

"My sovereign, I thank thee," cried
Pulgar joyously; "thou shalt find me not
unfaithful to thy trust. Permit that I with-
draw, that all may be arranged."

"Thou hast our leave," replied the mo-
narch, "and may God speed thee in thy
mission!"

Pulgar retired, but before returning to
his tent he walked rapidly in the opposite
direction for some distance, then paused,
and seemed uncertain as to what course he

should pursue; when forth from a tent, attended by one of her maidens, came a lady of tall and rather slight figure and graceful and elegant mien. Her small and shapely head and well-cut, beautiful features were shown to full advantage by the mantilla of lace which fell in heavy folds to her very feet. Pulgar started at the sight, and advanced eagerly.

"Lady," he began, "be not offended that thou seest me here; for Heaven hath surely granted me the boon of this brief meeting ere I depart."

"Thou speakest of near departure, sir knight," replied the lady. "Whither goest thou?"

"Heardst thou not, fair lady, that a defying dart was hurled from the hands of an audacious Moor at the very pavilion of our Queen? At nightfall I go hence, that this outrage may be avenged."

"Nay, the tidings had not reached me. But wherefore," she continued, "do you valiant and redoubted knights, who have given to Spain such proofs of loyalty and valor, thus risk your lives in new and perilous encounters?"

"Thou art kind, fair lady, who would thus dissuade us from our enterprise. Yet had I boldly dared to hope that from thy lips I should have heard approval of my venture."

She was silent, and Pulgar continued :

"Have I, indeed, been overbold in aught that I have said or done?"

"Not so, brave knight, for from the lips of woman should ever proceed the praise of valor and its inspiration. Yet do I lack the spirit which could urge to deeds of danger."

"Knowest thou not, dear lady," he proceeded in a lower tone, "that knights, when riding forth to war or combat, ever seek their guerdon in the smiles of those they love? Give me, I implore thee, some sign or token which I may bear upon my breast, the which, if, through storm and danger, I return to hear approval from thy lips, I may lay at thy dear feet; or if, in Heaven's wise decrees, this night should be my last, shall be sent hither to thee, dyed in the crimson life-blood of this heart that beats for thee."

"I know not what to say, brave knight.

If words of mine may urge to glorious deed, thou hast them; though, alas! my coward heart would fain dissuade from scenes of strife and peril. Bear with thee, nevertheless, this crimson ribbon, as thou desirest some token, and with it my poor prayers that Heaven may defend thee."

"For thy sweet sake," he answered, "I will now go forth to battle in a holy cause. More than I have said I dare not say till I return a victor; and if that may not be—" He paused, then added quickly: "keep place for me within thy heart as one who was, who had been ever, thy true knight."

He was gone before her lips could frame some farewell words, and she retired, sad and troubled at the remembrance of his danger. Pulgar hastened to his tent, and, summoning a few of his tried and trusty comrades, he revealed to them his plan.

"By my honor as a Christian knight," cried Aguilera, "I deem it little short of madness. What folly hath possessed thy brain, Pulgar, to risk thy life and ours so thoughtlessly?"

"Since when do Spanish nobles prefer

life to honor?" answered Pulgar haughtily.

"We may bethink us of some other means," added an older knight; "to venture thus within the walls of the infidel stronghold were surely but a tempting of Providence."

"I came not hither," cried Pulgar with flashing eyes, "to seek for counsel. To ye, my comrades, I have made known my resolve; wherefore ask I simply for your aid, and that ye bear me company unto the walls of the beleaguered city. Failing this, I go alone."

"That shall never be, Del Pulgar," cried the knights in eager chorus. "The danger that thou darest we shall also dare."

The time was fixed for that very night, therefore they all retired to hold themselves in readiness; and though each one knew that the golden sunlight of the morrow might shine upon his mangled corpse, not a man drew back, but girded himself with stern determination to do or die. Having secured a Moslem deserter as their guide, the little band directed their course across the dusky plain. The

night was bleak and stormy. The howling wind swept down in loud and boisterous gusts from the dwelling of the storm-king in the rugged fastnesses of the dark Sieras and over the desolate Vega. Not a star lit their way as noiselessly they sped on through the night and through the darkness, Pulgar and his thirteen companions. The trees waved their dark branches as they stood silently along their paths like ghosts of midnight sentries, who uttered no challenge, demanded no password. At length they reached the gates of the Moorish city, and it was decided that but four of his companions should scale the walls with Del Pulgar. Followed, therefore, by Bedmar, Aguilera, Montemayor, and Baena, they succeeded in effecting an entrance to the city. Drawing their mantles closely around them and firmly grasping their swords, they advanced through the quiet streets of the Moorish stronghold, so famed in song and story. The dim light of the lantern showed the quaint old buildings with their rare and curious carvings and graceful, curving minarets, while through the distance the clock in some

public hall or mosque noted with solemn, warning strokes the flight of time. Before the principal mosque they paused at a signal from their leader, and Pulgar drew from beneath his cloak a parchment scroll. Holding aloft the lantern, he showed to his astonished companions, to whom he had not confided the details of his plan, the words of the *Ave Maria* inscribed in blue letters on a dark-red ground, followed by a formal dedication of the spot to the worship of God and the honor of Our Lady. With one accord they knelt and fervently repeated the old, old prayer first uttered in the dawning of the world's history by heaven-taught, angel lips.

"My trusty comrades," said Del Pulgar as they rose, "Mary, Queen of the Angels, hath thus far been our shield and defence. She it was who prompted this deed, and unto her I give the glory of our enterprise."

With these words he reverently kissed the scroll and fastened it securely, using his dagger as a nail, to the wooden carving of the principal entrance; then taking from one of his companions a package of com-

bustibles with which each had been provided, he placed it close to the wood-work of another door, and, having ignited it, turned, followed by his comrades, from the spot.

"To the Alcariceria,* true and loyal knights!" he cried. "For God, Our Lady, and for Spain!"

They had almost reached it when they discovered that Montemayor, to whom the light had been confided, had through carelessness suffered it to become extinguished, which so enraged Del Pulgar that he aimed a blow with his sword at the unlucky youth, but Bedmar interposed.

"Spare the youth!" he cried, "and by my faith, in briefer space than thou canst think, I will bring thither fire which shall ignite a thousand cities."

He rushed back to the burning mosque, already surrounded by an alarmed and excited multitude, and, seizing a brand, hastened to rejoin his comrades, whom he found engaged in a desperate encounter with the city guard. They succeeded with

* The Alcariceria was a district of Granada entirely devoted to the manufacture of silk, and was considered one of the wealthiest portions of the city.

great difficulty in reaching the point at which they had entered, fighting their way to the very last, and leaving the ground strewn with the corpses of their opposers. Once without the walls, they mounted their steeds and soon regained the camp in safety, though much exhausted and bearing many a wound. They were received with great joy, and ushered by an eager throng into the presence of their sovereigns.

"Advance, sir knight," said the gracious Isabella. "'He of the mighty deed' hath this day surpassed his former feats in noble and generous daring. What guerdon can requite such an exploit as this?"

"Thy favor, gracious Queen, is full and ample guerdon for all true knights."

"I mind me, gallant Pulgar," said she, lowering her tone, "of a boon thou didst crave some little time ago. Perchance thou knowest how thy Queen may recompense thy deed of heroic valor."

"Aught that I can say, my sovereign, but poorly expresses Pulgar's heartfelt gratitude," he replied, catching the import of her words.

With one of her beaming smiles she dismissed him to make way for his comrades in the gallant exploit. To each of them was granted a large portion of land in the newly conquered territory, and to Pulgar the additional privilege of being buried in the new cathedral which was to replace the mosque of Granada. The day passed in general rejoicing throughout the Christian camp, while perchance the victor sought approval in the smiling eyes of his gentle and beloved Beatrix.

Within the walls of the beleaguered city, from gate to gate, from tower to tower, consternation and disorder prevailed. The mosque was in ashes, the city threatened, and the streets and thoroughfares strewn with the corpses of its hapless defenders. The story of Pulgar and his four companions was at first not generally believed, but many witnesses attested its truth. The King held council with his wisest and bravest warriors. Prominent among them was Tarfe, whom he had destined as the husband of the fair Zaida, his youngest sister. Suddenly the doors were thrown open and admittance craved for the youthful

princess. Alone and unattended, arrayed in her richest robes, she advanced, and, bending profoundly before the throne, she partly drew aside her veil and spoke thus :

"Most mighty lord and royal brother, this is no time for idle pomp or ceremony, and I, though a woman, dare intrude myself upon thy councils, to ask what may be done when our very lives are threatened and the temple of our fathers laid in ashes."

"Allah is Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet," replied Boabdil. "Bethink thee, sister, that it has been written in the Book of Fate such evil should befall the sons of Islam."

"But have ye agreed as to how ye may avenge the wrong, and teach the insolent foe he warreth not with cravens ?"

"Be calm, my sister, and hearken to my words," replied the monarch. "We have been pleased to assemble in council the bravest of our warriors, lovers of the Moslem cause, and true followers of Mahomet ; therefore, I pray thee, concern not thyself with what thou canst not aid."

Forth from the group of warriors stepped

the gallant Tarfe. Prostrate before the King, he exclaimed :

"Most redoubted lord, and commander of the faithful, permit that I sustain this day the honor of the Moslem cause. I will ride forth and dare to single combat any of their bravest Christian knights."

"Now Allah be praised!" cried the King. "The council is ended. Warriors, ye may retire. Tarfe shall be the avenger of his people!" The monarch then withdrew, followed by the band of Moslems, and Tarfe was left alone in the presence of his beloved.

"Tarfe," she said in a voice of thrilling sweetness, "once more wouldst thou risk thy life for my sake in the cause of our well-loved country. Its glory hath not fallen, its fortunes are not lost, whilst such as thee are left unto Granada."

"Even so, delight of my heart," said he; "once more will I go forth to vent my hatred on our common foes through love of thee. If, indeed, I live to return, lily of thy people, then may I, with proud and rapturous joy, dare to claim that beauteous hand, my loved Zaida; and if I die, trust

me, peerless jewel of Granada, it shall be with honor."

"And the Koran promises thee, my warrior, a paradise of lasting delights, where I will rejoin thee when the appointed hour hath come. But if thou returnest, this hand, this heart which loves thee e'en as it burns with hatred of our foes, shall be thine own, and together we shall recall the ancient glories of our race, and seek to inspire each Islamite with fiery courage and undying hate of the Christian name. Go! I can send thee forth in such a cause without one tear."

"But now, Zaida," resumed her lover mournfully, "now hath come the moment of farewell. It may, indeed, be written in the book of doom that I shall look upon thy face no more. O beauteous maiden, pearl of the dawn! remember how I loved thee, should these lips ne'er speak again the eager tale of hope and passion. Farewell! Thy lover goeth forth; victory or death is now before him."

He rushed from the room, and, hastening to the mosque, removed the scroll which had been placed there by the heroic Pul-

gar. In the broad glare of noon he rode forth again from the Alcazar gateway. The sun was shining down with fierce and withering beams; not a ripple was upon the waters, nor a shiver among the trees. The dusty and unprotected Vega was a toilsome path on such a day, yet Tarfe seemed unconscious of the heat and dust. He wended his way slowly, and turned now and again a backward glance on the dark walls and towers of the Alhambra, the gloomy fortress of the Albaycin, or fixed his gaze upon the waters of the Darro as he passed beside its flowering banks. Did some foreshadowings of his fate gleam like a prophecy from beyond the boundary that divides thought from matter? Were it so, there was none to whom he might communicate his thoughts, and he passed on across the sun-scorched Vega, till once more he reached the Christian lines. He rode slowly up and down before the walls, the now famous scroll of the *Ave Maria* affixed to his horse's tail, and boldly defied any Christian knight to single combat. Intense excitement prevailed within the camp. Pulgar was absent, but every knight

was eager to accept the challenge and sally forth to combat with the Moor. But the King was deaf to all their entreaties.

"Spain has need of ye, my nobles," he declared—"has need of stout hearts and strong arms in the final struggle. I forbid ye, one and all, to expose your lives in a quarrel so vain; for well have ye proved your dauntless valor on many a hard-fought field."

From the group which surrounded the throne rushed forth a youth of slender and fragile form.

"My sovereign," he cried imploringly, "let me ride forth, and in Our Lady's cause win my spurs of knighthood. I pray thee pardon my temerity; but these brave knights, my liege, have fought and bled for Spain, and I—"

"It may not be, brave youth—the boon I denied to stronger arms may not be thine; but in thy request thou hast shown the warlike and undaunted spirit of thy house. Content thee, boy; a fitting occasion shall be given thee ere long to win thy spurs."

Reluctantly rising, the youth withdrew,

but, in place of submitting to the King's command, he slipped away, and, donning his armor, rode hastily forth from the camp.

"Now Heaven forgive me!" he exclaimed, "for my disobedience to our royal master, and aid me in the coming contest."

When Tarfe beheld the boyish figure of his adversary, he was at first inclined to refuse his challenge.

"Return, rash youth," he said, "and know that Tarfe maketh war on men."

"Dost thou refuse my challenge, Moor? Then will I brand thee as a coward and a braggart. Seize thy lance and stand upon thy guard, or, by my faith, I'll charge upon thee."

Seeing that the boy was determined to encounter him, the Moor put his lance in rest, and soon the struggle began, and in the first course the Moor tottered in his saddle. The combat was long and severe. Lances were shattered, shields broken, and at length horses and riders rolled together in the dust. Meanwhile, from the walls of the encampment its progress was watched with eager interest by the Christian host.

"St. Iago to the rescue! . . . Holy Virgin! he is wavering. . . . By my halidome, the Moor totters! . . . Their blood flows fast! . . . Queen of Heaven assist him! . . . They fall! they are unhorsed!"

These and such like exclamations broke from the Christian lines, till the combatants rolled to the ground and were lost in a thick cloud of dust. A moment of suspense ensued, and then the youth was seen holding aloft the severed head of the Moorish warrior. A deafening cheer arose from the beholders, while the victor, holding the bleeding head and the scroll, which he had unfastened from the horse, rode slowly towards the lines. In the rejoicing which followed the King forgot his resentment at the disobedience of the youth.

"Forgive him," urged the Queen—"forgive the unknown knight who hath this day, in Our Lady's honor, braved even the displeasure of his king."

"He is forgiven," replied the monarch; "such deed as his had wiped away a hundred faults. Advance, brave champion," he continued, as the youth appeared amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd.

"Permit us to behold the conqueror in a noble fray."

He raised his visor and disclosed the boyish features of De la Vega, the King's favorite page. Then burst from the multitude a thunder of applause—

"The stormy cheer man gives to Glory on her high career,"

that loud, continuous, and tumultuous applause which thrills the heart and stirs the blood; sounds which the treacherous wind wafted over the Vega's plain to the walls of the Moorish city.

"Pardon, my liege, pardon!" murmured the youth, kneeling at the feet of the King with the trophies of his victory.

"Thou art pardoned, gallant youth!" replied the King. "The blood of yonder Moor hath washed away even fault so grave as disobedience to our royal word. Tomorrow, after sunrise, thou shalt receive the spurs of knighthood."

Queen Isabella extended her hand for him to kiss.

"Receive, brave descendant of a valiant race, the thanks of thy Queen"; and she added, unfastening a jewelled brooch from

her robe: "Wear this poor bauble in remembrance of thy first combat in a glorious cause."

He kissed her hand, murmuring some broken words of gratitude.

"Tell me, fair youth," she continued, smiling, "what damsel in our train may boast allegiance from so true a knight as thou hast proved thyself?"

"Thus far, my sovereign," he replied, "I combat in the cause of Mary, Mother of God; none other claims my devoirs."

"A high and holy cause is thine," said Isabella, deeply touched; "may she requite thee for thy heroic espousal of her cause to-day!"

Scarcely had the early morning sun appeared above the horizon when a vast assemblage of bishops and clergy, knights and ladies, pages and esquires, were gathered together to witness the investiture of the Christian champion with the order of knighthood. Amid a breathless silence, he advanced to the foot of the throne, and when Ferdinand, proclaiming him a knight, exclaimed, "Arise, Sir Garcilaso de la Vega! the faithful, brave, and fortunate,"

renewed acclamations rent the air, while nobles and ladies pressed eagerly forward to greet him under his new and well-won title.

It was night again in the Moorish city; the wind was murmuring and sighing in the trees, the plain was still and cold, the placid rivers flowed black and drear, and the jewels in Night's royal mantle appeared slowly, one by one, as the wan twilight faded. Afar o'er the dark fortress of the Albaycin the moon was slowly rising to her chair of regal state, just one faint portion visible from behind the envious clouds. Amid the odorous richness of the flowers, in the balmy freshness of the evening air, stood Zaida, awaiting the return of her valiant lover. Did no whisper come through the sighing trees to warn her that he for whom she waited would come no more? At last she heard, through the still night air, the tramping of horses, and with an eager, feverish impatience she waited, while through the dense darkness she could hear the sound come nearer and nearer. She knew not that they were bearing to her anxious, hoping heart the tidings that should bid it hope no more. Through

the quiet streets they bore her lover, who had gone forth at noon with the fiery heart of youth burning with hatred towards the people of God, enshrouded in more than Egyptian darkness, and had perished thus in an unholy cause. As they passed within the encircling battlements of the Alhambra, the moon emerged through the affrighted clouds, from behind the buttressed tower, and climbed, with majestic step, to her throne of sovereignty over the marshalled legions of the purple night. Zaida hastily entered the palace, and stood awaiting her lover at the head of the broad, marble staircase, leading to the great hall of the Alhambra. She paused in the shadow of an oriel window, through which the moon, unfettered by the latticed bars, shed its pale beams on her expectant face, on the dark stairway, the mail-clad forms advancing, and on the heavy velvet pall which covered a funeral bier. With one wild cry of anguish she sprang forward. "Who bear ye with such pomp and honor?" cried she, addressing the chief of the band. "What hero has fallen? What prince is no more?"

The moonbeams fell softly, pityingly around her as the chief replied: "We bear to the presence of the King the body of the illustrious Tarfe."

They passed on, not recognizing the Princess; but she detained them not, remaining silent and motionless as a statue. After a moment she followed them into the presence of the King, and, when the corpse was laid at his feet, she threw herself upon it and broke into a storm of passionate wailing.

"Star of thy race, thou art set; thy light is quenched in the darkness of death, and woe is me that I, thy beloved, may not follow thee beyond the grave! This, then, is our meeting, Tarfe, my beloved! Thy Zaida, who would have been thy bride, mourns thee in anguish and desolation. Dost thou not hear? Zaida speaks!"

But, alas! the ears that had heard with such joy her words of love were closed to all earthly sounds, and the lips that had breathed such passionate devotion would open no more on earth. She might not even gaze on the familiar features, even when Death, the sternest of conquerors,

had chained them to fixed and absolute repose. She dared not draw aside the pall which mercifully concealed the headless trunk of her hapless lover. They drew her gently away from the corpse of him who had passed for ever out of her life into the unbroken silence of the grave. Thus were these two hearts, which a bond of love, of passionate hatred for their common foe, and of deep devotion to their country, had united so closely, parted now for ever "far as death severs life." Love and hatred, and the thousand mysteries of the human heart, were over for him, and his arm of might would strike no more its potent blow in an unholy cause. Henceforward Zaida appeared not in council or at festival. Sometimes in the dim hour of twilight she was seen, in heavy robes of mourning, wandering through the flowering paths of her favorite gardens, recalling, perchance, his words of passionate tenderness and unholy resentment; reflecting, it may be, with remorseful pity, that her indomitable pride and fiery hatred of the Christian cause had urged him to his doom. Communing thus with the

past, gazing on the towers and streams of her beloved Granada, only as links which bound her to departed joys, she mourned no more the downfall of her country, nor dreamed bright dreams of the regeneration of her race. Her thoughts, her hopes, ever pointed onward through the misty, uncertain years to what her vague and shadowy belief showed her as the sunrise land of infinite joy, where, on the flowering plains of the Prophet's Paradise, the lover of her youth awaited her, the warrior to whom the Koran promised that immortal bliss. Alas! when even the visions of the world above are phantoms like unto the pale, brief joys that lure our hearts while here below. Alas! when 'tis but the Koran's fancied Paradise of sensual delights that deludes the weary watcher.

On the same night that witnessed Zaida's passionate grief Del Pulgar breathed his vows of love in the tender moonlight with the waving shadows of the trees beneath the lovers' feet.

"Sweet lady," he whispered, "thou who hast cheered me through the stormy path of war, hear the prayer of thine un-

worthy knight. Bind thyself to me, I pray thee, by true and lasting ties, that when thy soldier goes forth again to battle the thought of thee may cheer him through its perils. Say, what shall be his fate, gentle lady of my heart?"

She answered not, and he continued:

"The King and Queen consent that I should urge my suit; therefore, wilt thou deny me? Speak but a word, beloved! Tell me, wilt thou share my fate and be a warrior's bride?"

"Ay," she replied with sudden courage.

"I will be thy bride—thine, through joy and sorrow, till death do us part."

Then even the attendant maiden who stood apart perceived by the bright moonlight the glow of joy which lit the warrior's face. Bending low, he touched her fingers with his lips, as he answered solemnly:

"O thou to whom my vows are paid, may Heaven aid me to prove worthy of thy faith and love!"

The moon smiled and cast a flood of glory round them like the joy which filled their hearts; the night-wind whispered

through the trees, as the greetings of long-lost dear ones, and the stars seemed to glow and burn in the night's purple mantle, as the lovers lingered, exchanging vows which bound them in endless union. Even thus shone the radiant moon on the Moorish maiden's solemn tryst with her cold, dead lover, as on the glowing looks and sunny smiles of the Christian damsel's glad betrothal; gleaming down with equal light on parting and meeting, on the hopeless, despairing grief of the one, and the hopeful, loving joy of the other.

One month later the nuptials of Hernan Perez del Pulgar with the fair and gentle lady of his choice were celebrated with great splendor and rejoicing, in all the pomp and magnificence of the olden time; and in the joy of the hour was forgotten, for a brief season, the final, hard-fought struggle which was to wrest for ever the kingdom of Granada from the power of the Moors, and crown the Spanish arms with lasting honor.

Down through the long night of the ages tradition has preserved the legend of the *Ave Maria*, and in the cabins of

the peasantry, or by the midnight watch-fires of the muleteers, is told or chanted in rude verse the tale of how the gallant Pulgar fired by night the ancient Moorish mosque, and affixed thereto the parchment scroll with the ever-blessed words of the *Ave Maria*. In those days of chivalry and great exploit each manly heart delighted in proclaiming as his noblest boast his unwavering loyalty to the grand old Church, to its Master and Founder, Jesus Christ, and his Virgin Mother, the Queen of men and angels. In the battle's fiercest storm, or in presence of their most redoubted foe, the thought of the loved Madonna would nerve their hearts and arms, while from the bearded lips of war-worn soldiers would fall the gentle accents of the *Ave Maria*. O glorious chivalry of Spain! across the dark and tempestuous waves of the centuries, could ye behold how infidel and unbelievers, less earnest and less knightly than your ancient Moslem foe, seek to banish from Spanish hearts and Spanish lips the name ye once revered of Mary, Queen of Heaven, and few advance, as ye had done, to break a

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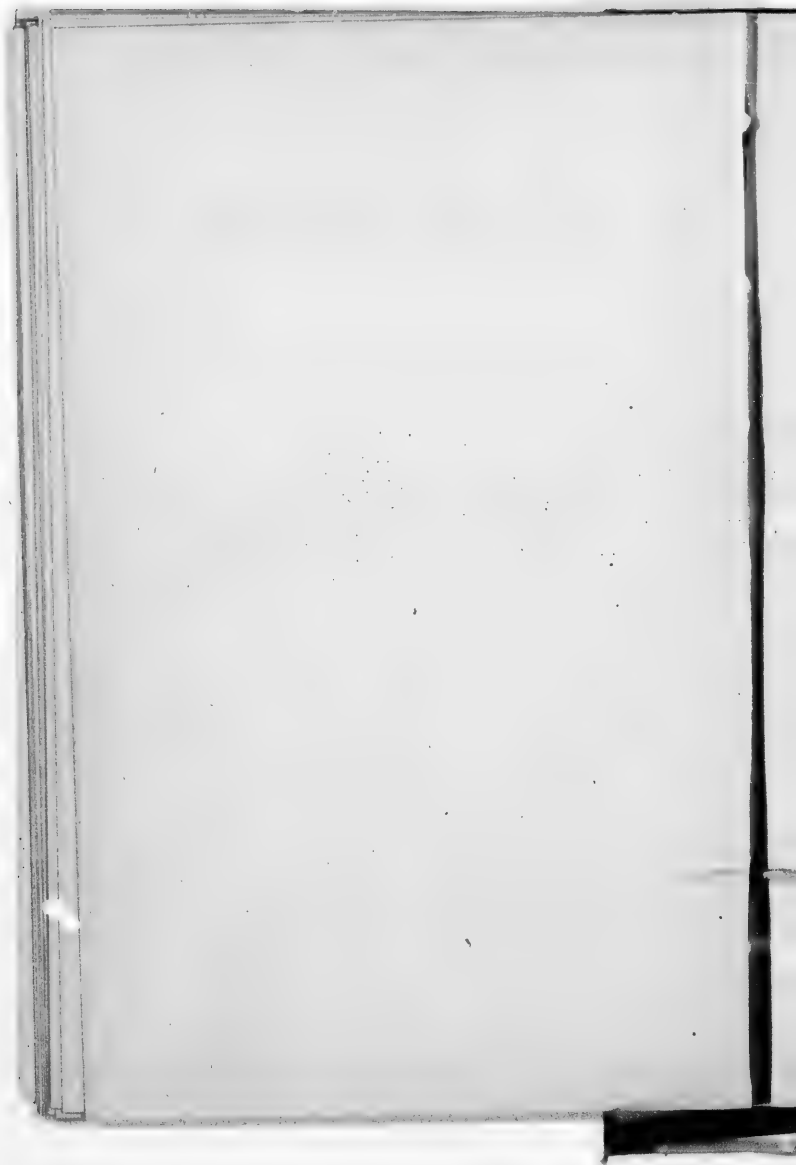
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lance in cause so holy. May other tongues
and pens, as we do now, record in centu-
ries to come the triumphs of the *Ave*
Maria !



her tongues
l in centu-
f the *Ave*

DONNA DOLORES.





DONNA DOLORES.

It is morning at Cordova, and the old town is all alive with the bustle and excitement which, in those bygone ages, was always so picturesque ; for hither and thither in the commerce of daily life passed men and women whom now, indeed, we see in galleries of old paintings, but meet no more, with their graceful and poetic costumes, in the broad glare of commonplace existence.

On this morning in the past the city was aglow with the warmth and exhilaration of a sunny day in early summer, dreaming not of a later time when upon its principal square would rise, as a trophy of victory, the great mosque of Abderahman, with its countless minarets, its wonderful architecture, and its forest of columns and light

shafts of Greco-Arabic mould, composed of jasper, porphyry, various colored breccia, and other precious marbles; its mosaics of tinted crystal, its verses of the Koran, its arches and arabesques and innumerable Moorish devices, and above all the glittering crescent.

But in this early part of the eighth century there was no trace of that marvellous pile, in later years the pride of the caliphs. The streets were, however, narrow and irregular, winding away into dim and shadowy nooks, or branching out into broad squares or esplanades, upon which churches or convents stood, with their dim cloisters and *patios* perfumed with the white blossoms of countless orange-trees.

Morning was softly resting on all things, having opened every flower-cup, watered it with pearly dew-drops, smoothed out the dark-green leaves, despatched the zephyrs to awaken the grasses and blow gentle breaths among them; while the trees, in their efforts to shake off the oppressiveness of night and sleep, had scattered over the earth aromatic showers of orange and citron and other Oriental blossoms.

The sun, too, was abroad, that far-famed and oft-quoted driver in the chariot of gold, who passes round the world among the regions of the upper air, and, at his mounting and descending, pours forth recklessly the treasures which he bears with him, purple and crimson, opal and violet, amber and pink, which fall among the clouds and reflect beautiful hues on the world beneath. At morning, indeed, he issues first in mantle of gray, which presently throwing aside, he displays his brightness. Thus over the Moorish town mist-shadowed dawn had passed, and the lavish gold was everywhere predominant.

On the bridge leading over the Guadalquivir to Ecija was a young Spanish girl richly dowered with the famous beauty of her race. Her eyes were large and dark, soft and liquid, with that lustrous languor, if we may use the term, which is peculiar to the Castilian face, and owes, perhaps, something of its brilliancy to the Moorish and Oriental admixture in the various races of Spain. Her forehead was rather broad than high, her face oval, save that the chin, though delicately curved, was

slightly pointed, marring the perfect contour. Her expression was quick, sparkling, and intelligent, flashing a moment, in true Spanish fashion, on the object of its regard, and as speedily withdrawn. Her hair was fair where the mantilla shows it, of the bright golden shade usual in that rare phenomenon, a Spanish blonde. In the grace and pliancy of her figure, the exceeding smallness of her feet and hands, no less than in the perfection of feature we have described, she was a fine type of that national beauty which poet and troubadour alike have sung, and with which, notwithstanding, we so rarely meet in the streets of the various Spanish cities.

The costume of her day was particularly adapted to bring out the beauty of her Castilian face. She wore a loose robe or flowing garment of amber-colored taffeta, of which the rich draperies mingled gracefully with the long lace mantilla covering her head and falling softly to her feet. Her neck was adorned with a circlet of twisted pearls and gold; her hair beneath the mantilla was fastened with a similar one, which

peeped through the lace and caught the sunlight.

She leaned over an arch of the bridge and gazed upon the water, as if counting the golden ripples on the Guadalquivir's smooth breast. Thoughtfully her eyes wandered afar off, following into the distance its sinuous windings, and seeming to ponder on its destination. Turning to her attendant, a bright-eyed, sunburnt Andalusian peasant, she said in a low, musical voice:

"See yon bark, my Sancha; it riseth on the wave and again dippeth down into the cool water, and on and away past many goodly shores."

"It seemeth heavily laden," replied the maid, "and, I would suppose, bears merchandise from distant lands."

"Sancha," said Donna Lola, half dreamily, already forgetting the bark and its trackless course, "what mournful doom hath fallen on our country that from end to end the Moslems devastate her fields and vineyards!"

"May God deliver us from their rage," replied the attendant, "and devote them to the dark fate they merit!"

"And yet," said Donna Lola softly, "I doubt me not, among them are loyal and knightly hearts, and I confess to thee, good Sancha, I do pity them in their unbelief."

"Whom dost thou pity, fair señorita?" asked a voice beside her. "It were well worth suffering hardship were such compassion its guerdon."

"Nay, Don Ruy, thou didst fright me," said the lady, perceiving that a knight in arms stood before her, while at the same time she offered him her hand, to which, after the fashion of the times, he lightly pressed his lips.

"Fright thee, fair lady? Nay, what further from my thoughts than to cause thee terror! Wherefore didst thou fear?"

"I bethought me," said the lady, drawing her mantilla rather coquettishly over the greater portion of her face, "of the wandering Moors, whom, we are told, are ever on the watch for Christian captives. But whence art thou come, sir knight, and wherefore?"

"Whence? From the palace, lady. Wherefore, dost thou ask? I have come thither to hold speech with Donna Dolores,

if, indeed, in her scorn or trifling, she send me not hence."

"Donna Lola's thoughts are not of thee," she answered carelessly, "but dwell rather on the fortunes of the Moors."

"And wilt thou now, sweet dreamer, rest them an instant on the fortunes of a Christian, the which, as thou knowest, lie at thy dainty feet? It is thine to raise or crush them in the dust, and this the place and hour."

"Bethink thee, sir knight, that the place and hour may, in my humble esteem, be unseasonable; wherefore I will pray thee to urge not upon me thy fortunes."

"Forgive the unseemly haste, but I beseech thee hear me; for to-night, it is whispered, the Moslems will assail the town, and each warrior in his place must be the rampart that shall hold them back. This feeble portion of that bulwark, then, most humbly craves that thou inspire a needed strength."

"Thou goest to face the enemy!" cried the lady, turning to him with blanched face and tear-moistened eyes. "The foe are at our walls, and thou wilt be in peril!"

"Ay, each warrior shall be in peril," said the knight, watching her keenly; "but is this aught to thee? Carest thou for my danger?"

She turned her head away to conceal a tear or two that stained her cheeks, and he continued his suit.

"If thou fearest for me, lady—if thou wouldst grieve for my fail, I pray thee give me courage. One boon thou canst bestow which will inspire my heart with strength and valor worthy of our cause. Wilt thou grant it, lady?" he said, lowering his voice and bending forward.

"I possess not the necromancer's art, good knight," said Lola, with downcast eyes, "and I guess not thy meaning. If boon thou cravest, I pray thee name it."

"Thou guessest not my meaning—thou knowest not the boon I crave? A heart, then, lady, and that heart thine."

"Methinks thou art not over-modest in thy requests," said Lola coquettishly, though her cheeks were dyed with crimson and her head turned from him. "Hast aught else for which thou cravest?"

"Ay," cried the warrior, "the heart I

tain would have should not be empty, but filled, I would e'en hope, with love, and accompanied by another gift—that of thy hand, O lady of my heart!"

The Guadalquivir flowed on calmly, the morning sun gilded the fair panorama of the quaint old city and the noiseless river, while the Donna Dolores, famed for her beauty throughout the land, plighted her faith to Don Ruy Garcia de Salas, who was likewise much lauded for valor and courtly bearing.

But the great business of the hour drove the consideration of private loves and hopes and hates out of every mind, and hearts were trampled under the iron car of the conqueror Duty. At the palace of the Christian governor bands of armed men hastened in and out, hither and thither. The clank of arms and the tread of mail-clad knights resounded on the marble stairs or in the halls where high council was held as to the city's defence. Full of pride in their own prowess, and dreading naught from the foes without, the warriors gathered round their chief, Pelistes, who, weary and worn with his long struggle,

had returned from fields of high emprise to defend the Christian cause in Cordóva. Magued, who was besieging the city, apparently dismayed by the height of the walls and the strength of the towers and fortresses, had towards evening drawn off his troops. Elated by this wonderful deliverance, the night was spent in joy and festivity.

It was, however, deemed advisable to keep an armed band of warriors within the palace, and with them, after a short interview with his betrothed, Don Ruy took his place.

In a somewhat retired street stood one of the most beautiful mansions or palaces of the town, of which the *patio* was filled with the choicest and most fragrant flowers, and the grated windows were heavily draped with satin and brocaded velvet and opened on gilded balconies. For a moment Donna Lola appeared to enjoy the fresh night breeze, then, re-entering, betook herself to prayer. A nameless foreboding, a haunting fear of evil, prevented her from sleeping, and she remained keeping her vigil alone.

Some time after midnight a fearful tumult rose in the streets without, and Donna Lolo's heart beat high with fear and anxiety. The tumult increased; the noise of armed men came nearer and nearer; the streets seemed crowded with throngs of excited people. The sound of combat, too, could be heard in the public squares and thoroughfares, and in the moments of awful suspense that followed Donna Lola prayed a voiceless prayer, her heart imploring protection of her God and of the Madonna. Treachery had been at work, and the Moors had entered the city by an unprotected passage.

Panting with rage and hatred for the Christians, Magued and his fierce crew came rushing through the dark, deserted streets of this quiet quarter of the town. Into the houses they burst like a wild tornado, pillaging, sacking, burning. As one in an awful dream, Donna Lola remained with clasped hands awaiting her fate. It had seemed to come upon her suddenly; and suddenly now, too, the room was filled with Moorish warriors. Sancha clung trembling to her mistress' side, with tears

streaming from her eyes, while she buried her face in her lady's mantle. Like a statue of marble, frozen by terror, stood Donna Lola, no tears falling on her cheeks, no words of prayer or entreaty coming from her lips, her eyes fixed with a stony stare of horror upon the conquerors of her native Cordova, at whose fierce beck was now her life or freedom.

A Moor with a gentler and more noble face, complexion little darker than the olive-color of the Spaniards, and with an air of stern command about him, had fixed compassionate eyes upon the poor young creature so utterly at their mercy. Catching his eye, Donna Lola seemed to awake from her stupor, and with a hasty movement threw herself sobbing at his feet, one word only upon her lips—"Mercy!"

The Moor glanced pityingly down at her, but in an instant life and consciousness faded from her face, and she fell senseless. He raised and supported her with one arm, while with the other he grasped his cimeter as if in defiance. A Moor fiercer and darker than most of his companions now approached, and demand-

ed by what right Yusef had claimed the captive. As their dispute waxed higher and higher, a man suddenly appeared at the door. His presence produced a marked effect; the soldiers ceased from their plunder and Yusef and his comrade from their dispute. The cause of the latter was briefly explained to him, and after a few moments' talk, Magued—for it was, indeed, the renegade general—reluctantly decided in favor of Yusef, who was no favorite with him. Moreover, the beauty of the lady had attracted his attention, and he might have claimed her for himself; but Yusef was too high in favor with the caliph and too valuable a supporter of the Moorish cause to be offended; so, with as good grace as possible, Magued granted him the prize he desired, and, furthermore, the permission to withdraw from the city and bring his captive to a place of safety far from the present scenes of strife and bloodshed.

Hastily did Yusef mount his horse and hasten towards the city's gates, bearing Donna Lola, still senseless, before him on his steed. When they had reached the plain outside the walls, he placed her in

a gorgeously-ornamented litter which he caused to be prepared, and, followed by a train of horsemen, began his course towards Granada. In profound silence they rode over the gray and sandy soil, with its scanty vegetation and solitary palm-trees, and beside the swift and silent river, whose windings Donna Lola had watched on that morning, that seemed so far off now, when her faith was plighted.

From time to time Yusef rode up to the litter, and, drawing the curtains, enquired after the comfort of his fair captive, who sat, pale, listless, and despondent, seeming to pay little heed to his courteous speeches. He strove to allay her fears, to console her in her sadness, but to her the fact remained, she was a captive in the hands of her country's foe, and what availed it that he whispered words of hope.

Now and again the sterile plain of the Guadalquivir was brightened into what might be called oases, where luxuriant vegetation, clusters of pomegranate, fig, and orange trees made the succeeding dreariness more barren and desolate.

Meantime, within Cordova's walls a handful of Christian knights, with their brave leader, Pelistes, had retired to the Convent of St. George, where they entrenched themselves, defying the foe, who remained masters of the town. When night of the second day came, lights shone out from every window of the old abbey, presenting thus to the still midnight of the Spanish town a beautiful and imposing picture. The enemy had desisted from their fierce assault upon the convent, and were sleeping with the stars keeping watch over them, and above their heads, as a canopy, the deep, blue sky, which had beheld unmoved their dreadful carnage. Turbaned sentinels, with gleaming cimeters, walked upon the walls, or pursued their dreary march up and down the silent streets, or across the bridge that divided the two portions of the town, and under the arches of which the Guadalquivir was rushing on, as cold and dark as that gulf which alike swallows up the brave and fair, the great and good.

Within the convent many of the Christian soldiers were at rest, lying upon their

arms dreaming of blood-red battle-fields or homes of peace. But amongst those who kept stern vigil for the day that dawned was Don Ruy Garcia de Salas, who had wandered all day long, notwithstanding the deadly peril, from street to street, from house to house, from square to square, seeking the one whom he loved and had lost. He had returned weary and dejected when hope had fled and he had been convinced that she had either perished or been carried off by the Moors, an opinion in which he was confirmed by the account given of the capture of her mistress by Sancha, who had escaped, she knew not how, and found refuge in the convent. His dream of joy, which, with delusive light, had lured him on to struggle so bravely for life, had faded, and drearily Don Ruy kept his watch alone and silent. Grief availed not, hope was dead, despair had grasped the sceptre, and the soldier wept. Burning tears fell upon the blade he wielded so nobly for Spain, tears which that brave heart could no longer control.

The cold dawn began to break in the

east, casting faint shimmering brightness over the swift-flowing Guadalquivir, dimly lighting the streets and houses, and waking the Moors who slept without from their deep slumber. But of what avail to him was the light of another day? True, he must fight—fight to defend the grand old city that had given him birth—but happiness was a vanished dream, joy the phantom of a phantom. One thing remained—glory, the thirst for high emprise which death alone can quench in the heart of a Spanish noble; and if his years of search should prove unavailing, he would live to avenge her death and deal out justice to his lady's murderer.

The day grew apace, and stern work, unceasing toil, might well have driven haunting thoughts from the warrior's troubled breast. But not so; stronger and stronger grew his craving, fiercer and fiercer his longing to discover the fate of his gentle Dolores; but danger threatened the noble Pelistes, threatened every faithful Christian knight who remained true to his colors; and where danger was, there Don Ruy must remain.

Meantime, the lady of his love was borne past the region of the Guadalquivir, and on to the Vega de Granada, that fairest and most charming of plains, which the dark sierras guard so protectingly, and the Darro and Xenil water into such luxuriance. Suddenly the whole magnificent panorama burst upon Lola's sight. The Antequeruela, and Alhambra, with its Torres Bermujas; the Albaycin, standing in stern grandeur on its rocky heights; the city of Granada, with its quaint Arabic character, and without the whole range of the Sierra Nevada overtopped by the peak of Mulhacen, glowing now with innumerable colors, which the sunset lends to the mountain-crests in these regions, producing a rare and marvellous effect.

As they approached Granada, Yusef rode up and ordered the litter-bearers to set down their burden. Drawing the curtains, he addressed Donna Lola once more:

"Fair sultana, whose peers among the loveliest maidens of thy race I have not seen, Yusef is thy slave and servant."

"Thou mockest me with thy idle

speech, proud Moslem," answered Lola, in a sad and gentle voice. "I am thy helpless captive."

"Nay, lady, say not so. Brighter are thine eyes than the jewels from the mine; paler thy cheek than the foam of the wave; sweeter thy smile than that of the houri; and Yusef repeats he is thy slave."

Tears flowed down the maiden's cheeks as she replied:

"Forbear, O warrior! thy flattering words. Hope hath abandoned me, and despair hath seized upon my soul."

"Cease thy tears, sultana," said the Moor; "Yusef loves thee and will harm thee not."

Silently the captive bowed her head and answered not a word.

"O lady!" cried the warrior, in a voice as musical as the courtliest of Christian knights, "raise thy fair head, which droopeth now in anguish; gaze upon this scene of glory. Behold the deep gold and crimson of the sunset; see its light abroad upon these beauteous streams, crowning the glorious palace of our kings, brightening the dark Albaycin, resting upon the city, of

which fame hath loudly spoken. Without there is deadly peril, strife and anarchy prevail; within there is peace and safety."

He paused, and continued in a lower tone:

"Before thee, lady, Yusef pleads. See, he kneels and sues for thy hand. He can give thee towers and fortresses, protect thee from evil and harm. Thy brow shall be bound with circlets of the finest gold and rarest jewels; the snow-white pearl, the sea-green emerald, the blood-red ruby, the pale opal, the yellow topaz, and the sovereign diamond—all shall be thine own. Rare aromatics, sweet-breathed incense shall perfume the air around thee. Costly tissues from far-off shores, cloth of gold and silver, purple Tyrian stuffs, velvet, and brocade, shall be thy garments. Gardens shall stretch before thee, wherein thy path shall lie among the gorgeous plants and blossoms of our fervid sky. In lordly halls thou shalt be the queen, with countless slaves to wait upon thy steps, and Yusef first among them. Thou shalt reign alone, thy empire undisputed, and he thy devoted servant."

"Nay, Moor, thy speech is wild and

vain," said Lola wearily. "Wherefore speak to me of gold and gems and pearl, when I mourn for homes and loves in fair and sad Leon? Why tell me of Granada's joys, when my heart hath sped over the plains to where Cordova lieth under the foeman's cruel sway?"

"But bethink thee, sultana," urged the Moor; "Granada boasts of gardens, walks, and sparkling fountains, gorgeous magnificence, to which Cordova hath ever been a stranger. Wherefore wilt thou return where war and danger lurk? Here peace and safety, joy and love, shall be thy portion."

"But if I tell thee, warrior," cried Donna Lola, bending eagerly forward with a sudden gleam of hope, "that love hath brightened sad Cordova into splendor beyond that of the fairest cities—into a region of delight surpassing the Elysian Fields of the Koran's paradise?"

"Thou lovest, lady," said the Moor wistfully—"lovest one without thy household band—lovest a Christian warrior?"

"Even so, O Moslem!" cried the lady earnestly; "and yet thou wouldst retain me here, far from that light which heaven

vouchsafes us here below; wouldst offer me Granada and its towers and streets of beauty, gold, and the cheerless sparkle of the ocean gems, for a heart and the warm light of eyes most dear."

"Then my love and hope, indeed, are vain," said the Moor mournfully. "Oh! wherefore, lady of the lustrous eyes, hath the Moslem's evil star brought him within their radiance—wherefore thus in vain hath the beauty of thy face stricken the heart of Islam's son? Thou shouldst have been my queen, followed as thou wouldst thine own belief, and I—but these are dreams! My evil star is in the zenith of its baleful light," he continued, rising and gazing upon the stars with a wild and half-inspired glance. "O Allah! look upon me; guide from the sky of my existence that star of my sad destiny, and permit that the light of happiness may yet illumine my pathway."

He stood thus absorbed, muttering strange, weird lamentations to the far-off stars, coming out one by one, like diamonds of pure gold in the blue pavement of the heavenly courts. Granada had fad-

ed from their sight, save the lights that from countless windows shone out resplendent from the huge pile of the Alhambra, and rested like a crown of glory upon the dark hill-top. The Albaycin alone was wrapped in gloom, and silent as the night itself. In the streets below the lights from innumerable dwellings appeared also through the dusk. The Moor remained for some moments still consulting the stars as they sailed across the firmament; for he firmly believed that they must guide his course over the great world of light and shadow, along the path that leads to the Elysian Fields of paradise, where the bearded Prophet, beside the throne of Allah, receives his followers. Meanwhile, Donna Lola watched him in breathless suspense. At length he turned to her.

"O star!" he cried, clasping his hands and addressing her with the same inspired glance he had bestowed upon the heavens—"star which hath risen for a moment of great joy upon Yusef's stormy life, depart and join thy kindred lights within those walls where thy sweet spirit fain would be. Fair Christian, here thou

shalt not stay in mourning and despair when the bright vision of thy love allures thee hence. And yet until the troubled night of Yusef's destiny hath ended in a dawn of infinite joy within the paradise of Allah, he shall not for an instant lose thy memory nor forget the joy of having known thee. O sweet sultana! when the light of a beloved presence shines upon thee, give one thought to the hapless Moor who loved thee only less than honor. To-night thou shalt depart for Cordova, and mayst thou revel in the bright sunlight of love's happy morning."

"Believe me," said Lola earnestly, "O noble Moslem! it shall be my pride to remember that so generous a heart has loved me. My own is full of gratitude to thee, and yet I cannot thank thee, for Heaven alone can worthily requite thee. Yet a word: I grieve that I have caused thee sorrow."

"Nay, grieve not, lady," answered the Moor; "I shall seek forgetfulness where warriors best can find it, on the red field of war. And now for thee; twenty of my bravest warriors shall attend and speed

thee safe into the very heart of the beleaguered town, to the stronghold of thy Christian kindred. But Yusef says thee here farewell. From thy too sadly sweet presence he must hasten, lest his malignant star should urge him to repent that he has set thee free."

With some parting words of gratitude, and eyes bedewed with tears, Lola drew the curtains of her litter, and Yusef, having given orders to the chief of his Gomel horsemen, turned slowly and sadly to the Puerta del Granada, while Lola and her retinue slowly resumed their way across the silent, starlit Vega, on either side of which the gold of the Darro and the silver of the Xenil were alike dark and cold in the shadows of night.

Yusef remained alone, having dismissed his remaining horsemen, and gazed after the departing train, over the silent Vega, over the mournful rivers, over the bleak pile of the sierras, and up at the burning stars.

"O evil planet!" he cried, stretching his hands towards the heavens, "O malignant star of my hapless fate! wherefore

hast thou pursued me? O queen of my heart, bright empress of Yusef's love! thou wilt find within thy native Leon the joy and gladness that I, among Granada's beauteous scenes and gorgeous palaces, shall never know again."

Covering his face with his hands, the Moor remained a moment in mournful meditation.

"Wherefore," he cried suddenly, "did I permit her to depart? Time would have softened her grief, the beauty of Granada gladdened her spirit, and Yusef's love, perchance, gained her heart. But no, I *could* not be her jailer; nay, I *would* not be her tyrant. Better is it now that I remain enshrined in her gentle thoughts as the restorer of her joy, the bestower of her happiness, though Yusef is alone."

Mournfully he turned, and passed through the city's gates, in all the grandeur and the beauty of the scene, alone. No heart to cheer him, no voice to greet him, all alone, the deep silence of the place and time seeming to harmonize with his thoughts. Poor follower of Islam, true thy courage, unsullied thy devotion,

noble thy generous heart! Perchance the future holds some compensation for thy present pain, some guerdon for thy sacrifice.

Meanwhile, Lola, as she pursued her way with the train of Gomel horsemen over the Vega, drew aside the curtains of her litter to gaze out upon the landscape. The dark figures of the swarthy Moslems were motionless upon their horses as marble statues. No sound, save the swift tread of the litter-bearers, broke in upon her reverie; for the Vega was very quiet, the night air very still. Lola was lost in admiration of the Moor's astonishing generosity and great nobility, and could not restrain a sort of regret for the loss her gain had been to him.

The journey was long and tedious, but the Vega was soon past, and before her eyes stretched out once more the Hispalis, or plain of the Guadalquivir, the distant walls and towers of Seville, prominent amongst which were the Torre d'Oro, made golden as their name by the bright morning sun.

During Lola's absence the Christians

had been gallantly defending their stronghold. Magued retained possession of the town, and still besieged the old convent. Don Ruy Garcia de Salas was always to be found among its foremost defenders; but he had grown stern and grave, seldom smiling, and constantly bewailing his lost love and her mysterious disappearance. During the silent hours of the night he paced the lonely halls looking out over Cordova and its flowing river. In those old cloisters, where of yore the monks had hastened at Matin bell, or come to sing their Vesper anthems, Don Ruy saw many a midnight fall and many a pale, white dawn break in upon the darkness. Men marvelled at the change that had come in the gay and genial warrior transforming him into a quiet man, scant of speech and scanty yet of smiles. But the mists were soon to melt, the bright light of a beautiful dawn was about to break over the darkness of the warrior's deep sorrow.

One morning he descried, from the high towers of the convent, a train of Moorish horsemen wending their way slowly and softly over the plain. He watched them

enter the gate, but his eyes were sad and listless, unconscious of their burden, unconscious what they brought to him. The troop drew nearer; challenged by the Moorish guards, they made themselves known to their comrades, and having given Yusef's name, were permitted to proceed on their way.

At the convent gates the commander rode forward and claimed admittance for his Christian captive. After some moments' parley, the warder absolutely refused to receive her, suspecting some snare. The Gomel leader paused irresolute, and the warder had finally consented to summon Pelistes, when the clank of a sword and the quick tread of a warrior was heard upon the marble hall. Don Ruy advanced, and having learned from the warder the cause of the loud dispute, proceeded himself to question the Moorish envoy. He was soon convinced that the lady was really a Christian captive, although he was at a loss to imagine what the Moor's motive could be in thus returning her to her kindred.

Cautiously the gate was opened, the

lady passed within, and it clanked again on its great hinges. The lady, perceiving the knight, stretched out her hands.

"Don Ruy, knowest thou not thy Lola?"

"Know thee, thou dead alive," cried the warrior in amazement, "thou star of my night! nay, mock me not, whoever thou mayst be. I implore thee, lady, counterfeit not the sweet light of a soldier's life."

When she threw back her veil, and he saw that Lola indeed was before him, his joy was past description. The stern features were brightened again, the old joy came back to his face, the old happiness to his heart, and together they tasted once more the brimming measure of gladness which had been so suddenly dashed from their lips. The tidings of her return were broken gently to her gray-haired father, who received her as one returned from the dead. He had been in his day a famous warrior, but was now so chilled with the frosts of old age that joy was slow in reaching his heart, or taking a hold upon his life. Throughout the garrison the marvelous tale spread fast of the Moslem warrior who had generously released his

Christian captive and restored her safe, through danger and through strife, to the very centre of her Christian brethren.

In the little chapel of the Convent of St. George, Don Ruy and Donna Lola were to be solemnly betrothed. Wherefore, a day or two after her return, the chapel was decorated as well as the position of affairs permitted. Thither, one quiet afternoon, came Pelistes and the other officers of the garrison, and after a momentary pause the youthful lovers entered. Donna Lola was most fair and beautiful, though her garments were not what in happier times would have adorned the occasion. The strange solemnity of the time and place had marked her soft and girlish features with a deep, unwonted gravity, and her eyes, when raised an instant to the altar, shone with an inspired light. The chapel was full of knights in martial array, and ladies in the simple and sombre garments to which necessity had reduced them, and which seemed to comport well with the gray, mildewed walls and solemn aspect of the old convent. After the ceremony of betrothal had taken place,

congratulations and good wishes poured in upon them on all sides. But no time this for idle mirth nor prolonged festivity, and before evening the garrison had returned to its ordinary silence and watchfulness. Yet the young couple were happy, with a grave, subdued happiness, the brave followers of Pelistes rejoiced in their comrade's good fortune, and Donna Lola's venerable father was full of delight in having thus secured a protector for his daughter from among the bravest of Spain's chivalry. It was agreed that when the fortunes of the Spaniards at Cordova should seem brighter their nuptials would be celebrated with fitting pomp, and the ceremony of marriage succeed that of betrothal.

The weeks glided by, and a terrible ally of the Moorish cause appeared within the fortress—want and famine were making sad havoc among the Christian troops and speedily reducing their number. It became evident that something must be done, and that speedily, either to capitulate and obtain what terms they could from the Moors, or make a bold effort to

secure provisions. The former course of action was rejected with disdain, and yet no plan could be devised by which the second might be carried into effect. Pelistes at length declared that he would sally forth alone, and in disguise, to obtain, if possible, a supply of provisions, and send tidings of their dire distress to the other Christian towns.

We need not here repeat the oft-told tale of how Pelistes issued from the town and was followed by the renegade, Magued; of their bloody encounter, and the defeat of the half-exhausted Christian leader. Their combat took place beside the swiftly-flowing river, among the grayish sands and scanty shrubbery of the shore. Meanwhile, the anxious warriors watched from their Convent of St. George, and gazed out upon the plain for traces of their leader. A troop of Moslems entered the gate, and the Christians perceived Pelistes borne, pale as death and bleeding, on a bier. Then died their hopes; then faded their dream of conquest; but revenge remained. Besides, it was not yet too late; Pelistes might be saved. Out

rushed the gallant few in a vain effort to save their leader. The Moors were, of course, in an overwhelming majority, and drove them back, entering their last stronghold with them. Hand to hand, foot to foot, they fought; into the cloisters, into the church, into the council halls, the brave cavaliers fighting with desperate courage. But courage availed them not, their doom was sealed, and we pass over in silence the short struggle, which, when evening came, left scarce a Christian warrior on the scene of carnage.

In one corner of the chapel Donna Lola crouched in mortal terror, white and rigid with deadly despair. Her father had been carried off before her eyes. She had remained unnoticed, as one by one the Moslems rushed out in pursuit of a few straggling remnants of the Christian host. All at once she heard a step approach. Trembling, her strained eyes sought to pierce the darkness. A warrior, torch in hand, advanced and stood before her. She clasped her hands in a mute appeal, and the warrior spoke.

"Lady," he said softly, "a star of

bright portent hath brought me hither to thy side. Once more thou art my captive; but Yusef hath never ceased to be thy slave."

"Yusef!" she cried, starting to her feet, roused from her apathy; "thy captive again, O kind preserver! But hearken," she whispered eagerly, "one favor, generous Moslem; my lover guards the gate; haste, that we may seek him and he, too, become thy captive."

The Moor remained for a moment silent, as if weighing the cost of a new sacrifice. This knight whom he was called upon to save stood between him and happiness; he had lost again the chance that fate threw in his way, and now—but the Moslem was true, not one hollow ring in the pure gold of his nature.

"Follow me, lady," he cried, "and Yusef shall save thy lover."

On they went in silence through the old monastic halls, through the dim cloisters, where awful sights revealed the fierceness of the struggle. Mangled corpses lay in ghastly piles upon their path, and Yusef vainly sought to screen them from his

companion's eyes. Cautiously he guided her, that her feet might avoid the pools of crimson gore. By the light of the torch, they finally gained the entrance to the convent, now thrown wide open. The city was lying calm enough without; lights were gleaming through the dusk; but the evening wind entered and moaned and whistled in the cloister halls. Just beside the gate, in the dark shadow of the wall, they discovered a body. A wild scream from Lola proclaimed to the Moor that their mission was accomplished. Stark and lifeless, with visor raised, disclosing the features, Don Ruy lay. On his face was a look of stern determination; in his right hand was his sword, still firmly grasped, and his left arm lay outstretched upon the floor in the stiffness and helplessness of death. The evening wind stirred the hair upon his temples; the sightless eyes were still wide open, seeming to gaze out upon the distant rushing river, beside which his troth was plighted. Swifter and darker than that water had come the tidal wave of eternity, bearing him away darkly and noiselessly

upon its surging billows, out into the great hereafter. Again the obstrusive stars were shining down from the distant firmament, down from the Heaven whither the soul of the Christian warrior had flown.

Piercing were the cries, heartrending the sobs and lamentations of the maiden for her lover. Yusef stood by, half-bewildered, but sympathizing with her sorrow. He had promised to save her lover, but a grim warrior whom he might not defy had been beforehand with him. Death, the ice-mantled conqueror, had frozen him to repose.

A rush of thought came over the Moslem's mind. Fate had again interposed, and the bright star of his happier destiny seemed at last in the ascendant. But jealousy of the dead, of the grief thus lavished on the senseless form, was struggling with compassion for Donna Lola and pity for the gallant defender of the fortress, whose tree of life was thus cut down at noon, when the sun of hope was bright in the firmament of love.

Lola, too, began to realize her fearful situation. She was alone, her lover dead,

her father taken captive, perhaps slain by the foe, and she, helpless and unprotected, in the power of the Moor. She knew his generosity, and had experienced his courtesy; but still she was alone, without a meet protector. By Yusef's diligent efforts, her faithful attendant, Sancha, was found, and the Moor then began to make preparations for their escape from the town. He treated them as he had before treated Donna Lola, with the utmost courtesy and consideration. He brought them, with a strong guard, to one of the nearest cities still in possession of the Christians, and there left them in security, bidding Lola farewell at the city's gate.

Years passed on, and the autumn's burden of golden grain was mingled many a time among the Spanish hills with the red harvesting of war's blood-stained scythe. The Moors had gained possession of some of the fairest portions of Spain, and the struggle still raged fiercely, though some provinces had settled down to a peaceful calm. In one of these dwelt the beautiful Lola, who since her lover's death had

never ceased to array herself in robes of mourning, and to lead a most retired life. Nearly ten years had passed since the massacre at the Convent of St. George, and left few traces on her lovely face, which we saw on the morning of her betrothal mirrored in the Guadalquivir's smooth waters. Her face was graver, more subdued, and seldom lit now by the smiles that in the happy summers of her sixteenth year were wont to chase each other like ripples on the surface of a rivulet. She lived, as we have said, retired from the world. An elderly duenna, or companion, accompanied her everywhere. Sancha, too, was with her, married to a soldier to whom she had been betrothed in Cordova. With several other servants and retainers, they composed her household. Here she devoted herself to works of piety, hearing the early Masses every morning, giving to the poor, tending the sick, laboring for the conversion of the Moors. And thus, the spring-time of her young life changed into a sort of premature summer, she worked for the distant heaven that seemed daily growing nearer to her.

One evening she went as usual to the church, and was kneeling, calm and serene, before the altar, her heart ascending on the wings of prayer to the throne of God. As she knelt she observed a figure which in some vague way seemed familiar. It passed and knelt for a few moments just where the red light of the sanctuary lamps fell upon it. She soon forgot the momentary impression of familiarity, and became again absorbed in her devotions. At last she rose, and, followed by her duenna, passed out of the church. Just as she had come into the open air a step sounded on the marble esplanade of the cathedral, and the figure of a warrior issuing thence approached her.

"Lady of the radiant eyes, that long ago enchained my heart, I salute thee!" said the warrior in a low, deep voice.

"Yusef!" cried the lady, "or do I dream? O Moslem! I rejoice to meet thee again."

"Didst thou observe the place of our meeting?" asked the Moor, pointing to the cathedral.

"Was it thou, then," asked the lady

eagerly, "whom a moment since I observed in prayer before the tabernacle?"

"Ay, lady, even so. I too adore thy God, the God of the Christians, and for the Koran have now the Gospel."

"For this, O Yusef!" cried Dolores, "I have prayed at morning and at eve—prayed that, in recompense for thy charity to me, thou shouldst one day adore the living God I worship."

"Hence was it," answered Yusef, "that his grace came stealing o'er my soul like the pale moon over the dark Guadelete. To thee I owe my new-found faith."

"Heaven be praised! God and the Mother of God be glorified!" cried Lola fervently. "But when and where was the blessed change wrought?"

"Not now the hour or place to tell a tale both long and wearisome; but, oh! believe, bright star, that since thou first didst rise upon the darkness of my life the clouds dispersed, slowly, indeed, but surely, till the dawn of true belief broke through and lit up all my sky."

He accompanied her to her door, and

when she had disappeared remained a moment alone without.

"O Heaven! grant," cried he, gazing upon the firmament, "that the malignant star of evil omen hath vanished for ever from my path. But nay," he added, checking himself, "O heathen soul! there are no stars of evil portent in the sky of faith; the constellations that illumine it are all resplendent with bright hope and joy."

Wrapping his long, dark cloak around him, he vanished through the gloom of the surrounding streets.

The months began to glide by, till stern winter had taken flight on its wings of frost to its far dominions in the frozen Northland, with its brilliant constellations, Orion, and the Boreal Crown, and the stars which form the circlet once resting on the head of mournful Ariadne. Spring came forth in all the beauty of a child, with the winning smiles of that time of life when the soul is still marked with the new, unsullied image of its Creator, and with the vernal beauty which makes youth seem fresh from the hand of its Maker. One by one

the little blossoms stole out from their leafy caverns; one by one the tiny blades of grass thrust their heads above the earth, rejoicing once more in the sunshine; one by one the trees stood in garments of pale green; one by one the breezes grew soft and balmy, and the heart of man was gladdened.

A new spring had come for Lola. Bitterly she had mourned the dead, and long she had believed another love impossible; but the maiden was only in her sixteenth year when death had claimed her lover, and nine long years had worn away the first absorbing sorrow. Yusef was all devotion; Yusef was now united to her by the bond of a common religion; Yusef had shown unparalleled magnanimity when fate had thrown her into his hands; and Yusef merited the heart which had been the load-star of his existence since the hour of their first meeting. Dolores at last opened her ears to the music of a voice whose melodious tones had soothed her pain long years ago upon the Vega de Granada. When he asked her to be his bride, that scene rose before her again—the Mulhacen

in its evening robe of marvellous light; the Alhambra in its veil of twilight gold; the Albaycin in its sombre grandeur; the Darro and the Xenil, running their swift race, each to pour out its treasures into the great ocean. At that time Yusef had laid at her feet all material goods, which united could not give her happiness. Now he offered her far less, but showed her a future of possible joy, and gladly she accepted the offer; wherefore the setting sun of that happy day took with him a reflection caught from her second betrothal-ring.

At the court it began to be whispered about that the noble recluse, Donna Lola, was about to bestow her hand upon a Moorish warrior whose high distinction and unsullied fame among his countrymen had been little lessened even by his conversion to Christianity. Not averse to these matches, which considerably strengthened the Christian cause, the reigning monarch willed that the nuptials should be celebrated at the court with all due pomp and splendor.

On the appointed day the heavens, as if in celebration of the event, were cloudless,

only flecked here and there by white clouds, like foam on the blue surface of the ocean. As the bridal train passed through the halls, the sun, despising the pallor of the marble, laid a cloth of gold beneath their feet, and, seeming to have taken upon himself the decoration, busily wreathed the pillars, freshly gilded the carving, and, hastening in through the open door, sent a flood of molten gold to light the chapel and bring out the colors in the porphyry and *breccia* pillars. Over the altar he threw a golden haze like a veil, polished the stained-glass windows, and cast a hasty, disapproving glance at the grim-looking stalls, as he turned to the door, again, to await the bridal train and lead it up the principal nave to the chancel-rails, where solemn vows were to be pronounced.

Loud swelled the music's victorious sound, for in joyful strains of that time martial triumph was always mingled; deep harmonies rushed through the vaulted naves, and bore up the hearts of the worshippers in swelling chords to the very throne of the Most High. The bridal

train entered ; the Moor's dark olive face bespoke such nobility and generosity of soul, and was withal so handsome, that many a maiden heart smothered a sigh and many a manly eye looked upon him with approval ; yet the courtiers, glancing from him to the bride, felt involuntary regret that some noble Spaniard had not held the place this son of Islam so nobly graced.

The ceremony was performed by the archbishop ; the bride's fair head bowed low to receive the benediction, and at that moment the sun placed his bridal gift, a crown of gold, upon her hair. The king gave her away, taking the place of her dead sire, the ceremony ended, and Lola was the bride of Yusef. Louder and louder pealed the notes of triumph, brighter and brighter shone the royal sun, as the bridal pair turned to pass down the nave, and thence out into the portico. The courtiers pressed around them with acclamation. The queen, as Lola advanced to kiss her hand, took the fair bride straight to her heart. The clergy prayed their prayers for her, and begged her through the future to remain true to herself, true to God, as she

hitherto had been, rejoicing with her, like the angels of God, for the one soul that had done penance.

"I rejoice, most reverend sir," said Lola, addressing a venerable priest, "that by no human means hath this great good been wrought. The grace of God alone hath worked it."

"It is the answer to thy patient prayers," answered the priest. "The most high God hath done great things for thy husband and thee, blessed be his name for ever and ever."

"Yea, reverend sir, blessed, thrice blessed," answered Lola reverently.

Then they proceeded to the banquet-hall, where magnificence worthy of the occasion was displayed. Spain and her nobles did them honor, the Spanish sovereigns graced the banquet-hall. Glittering coats of mail were side by side with garments of the softest and finest tissues, from countries just upon the limits of the then known world. Banners and swords and costly draperies, gems and jewels of fabulous price, fair faces, bright smiles, knightly forms, alike gave lustre to the

wedding-day, while among the guests were some whose names the voice of fame had caught up and borne away with her on her long and tireless errand, which should last when those who bore them were mouldering for generations—names of which the bearers had often, with their dauntless blades, turned war's red tide for Spain. Glorious was the pageant, glorious were the actors in it, glorious was the magnificence which that most royal sovereign displayed for her, the daughter of a valiant knight. Long afterwards, when the court and those who composed it had faded from the scene, like a drama at the theatre, was it told to wondering ears how unrivalled the splendor of the nuptial feast of Donna Dolores with the noble Moslem warrior, who had become heir to a mighty kingdom, where reigns eternally God the Creator and his innumerable servants and courtiers, the saints and angels.

THE END.

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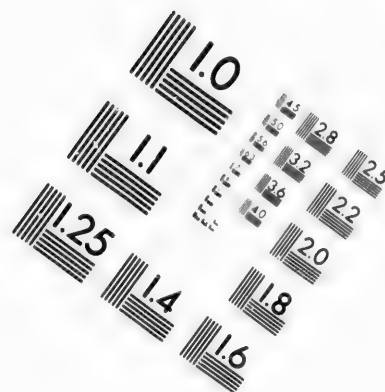
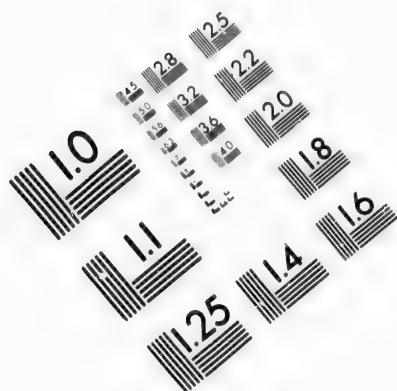
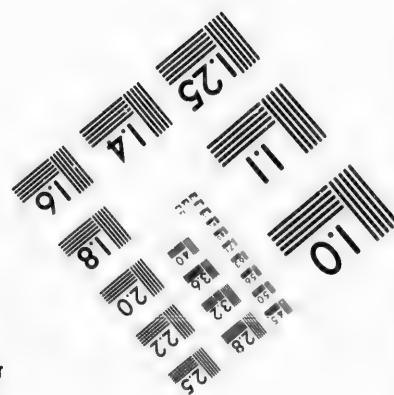
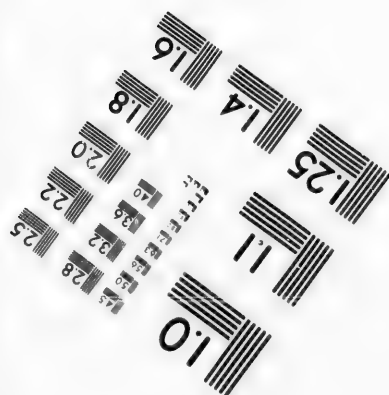
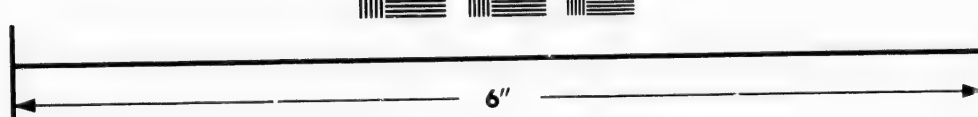
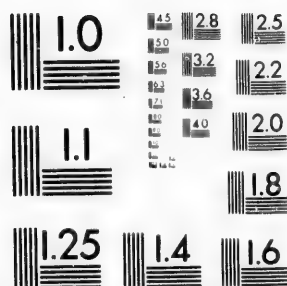


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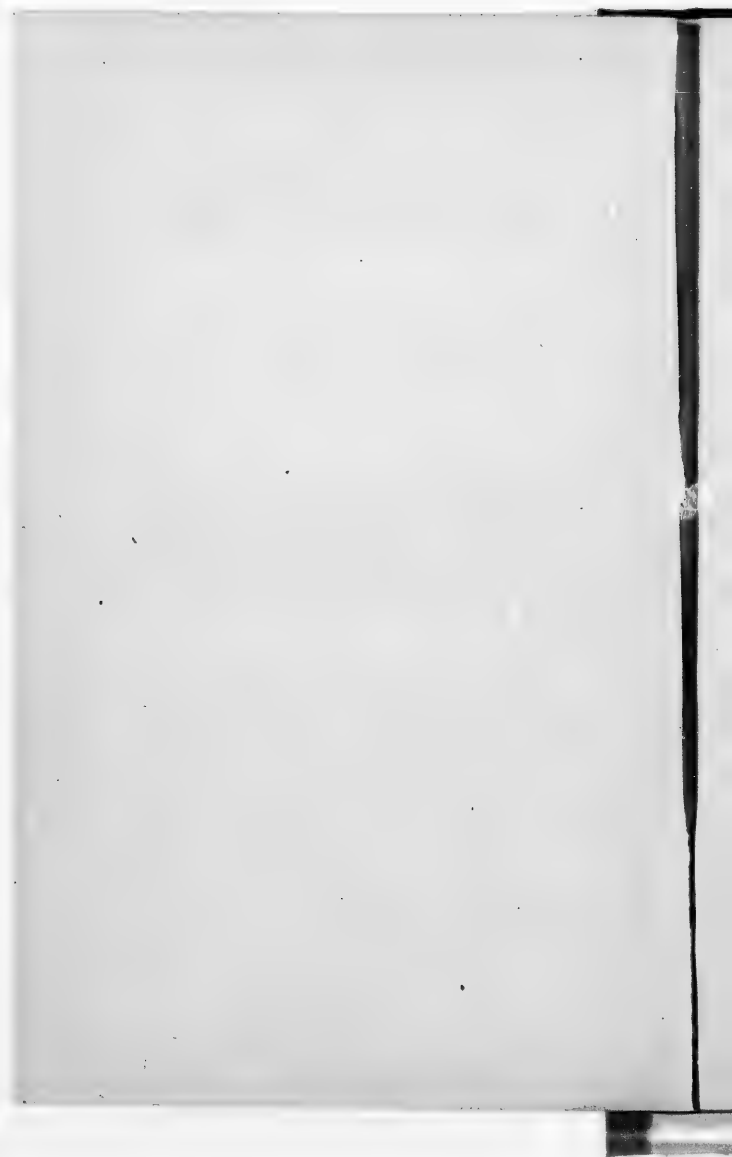


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PEDRO'S DAUGHTER.





PEDRO'S DAUGHTER.

SPAIN was not precisely at the zenith of her national glory in the famous days when the Treaty of Partition threw all Europe into an intense excitement, which ended only with the equally celebrated Treaty of Ryswick. Spain had fallen into a decline; her prowess in arms and the might of her armadas seemed almost as far off now as the times of the Spanish cavaliers and the heroic ages of their conquests over the Moor. Her people, too, had degenerated; her kings only resembled the mighty monarchs of the past as did the pale train of Scottish rulers whom the witches summoned from their royal tombs before the affrighted gaze of the murderous Macbeth.

King Charles had fallen into a hopeless

melancholy, his mind the prey of morbid fancies and wild imaginings. Famine had come down upon the land and grasped it in a vice of iron. The people rose at length and fiercely rushed to the king's palace in Madrid, where their sovereign lay in a restless and troubled slumber, which seemed to bring no relief to his tortured brain.

Within the palace fear and confusion reigned supreme, and none durst make a movement towards conciliating the clamorous mob. At last the queen, who was of haughty and resolute character, came forth from her apartments and demanded the cause of the tumult. She was answered that the populace, craving for food, had besieged the palace.

"And ye, my Spanish nobles," she said scornfully, "stand here irresolute. An impartial observer might use harsh terms in your regard."

Sweeping past them, she gave her orders:

"Let the windows be thrown open. I will speak with this clamorous multitude."

Her tall and stately figure appeared

upon the balcony, her velvet robes and ermine mantle showing off her graceful and dignified bearing to the best advantage.

"What do you demand, my subjects?" said the queen in a clear, rich voice.

"Food! food!" cried the mob tumultuously.

"Your demand shall be met," said the queen; "only have patience."

"Our patience is exhausted!" cried the mob; "we must speak with the king!"

"The king is ill, my friends," said the queen, "and hath sent me as his envoy."

"We want the king himself! Charles! Charles! you must show yourself!"

"What is this, my people," said the queen courageously; "would you insult your queen? I tell you Charles is ill, perhaps dying. Disperse quietly, return to your homes, and bread shall be provided."

A yell of rage broke from the crowd, so that the voice of the queen was completely drowned, and she was forced to retire, full of indignation at this daring insult offered her. The violence of the mob became such that it was clear the king must

be induced to appear. The queen herself stepped softly to his side.

"Charles," she said, "arise; our very lives are threatened. Thy subjects clamor at the doors for bread, and demand your instant appearance."

"What, the people have risen!" cried the king, starting up; "besiege the palace! what must be done?"

"You must appear," replied the queen, "and make an effort to conciliate them."

"Cursed be those who have roused them to this pitch of fury," said the king; "and oh! I have had such fearful dreams, which chill my blood even now to recall them."

"Leave dreams aside," said the queen sternly, "or the realities may be worse."

Supported by the French ambassador, Harcourt, who was extremely popular with the people, Charles appeared on the balcony, deathly pale and scarcely able to stand. He was forced to make several concessions to the people, amongst which was that of dismissing the unpopular ministers, to whose neglect the present calamities were principally due. The queen was

much displeased; for most of the members of the administration favored the Austrian cause, to which the queen, being of the house of Austria, naturally inclined. She held a stormy interview with Harcourt, who smiled, and bowed, and made every effort to conciliate her.

"The king, indeed, looked ill," said a plump matron to her husband, "and I hope the mob will not have his death upon their souls, bringing him out into the chill air."

"Oh, no fear, Josefa," said the good man cheerily; "death and the king are strangers for some time yet. Why, I vow he was in a similar strait long before I married you. So come home in peace; we citizens have got what we want, and let that suffice."

Home they went, though the good woman on her way took occasion to remark the queen's haughty deportment, not forgetting the magnificence of the trailing robe of velvet, and the brightness of the jewels in her crown. This worthy couple occupied a quaint-looking dwelling in a retired street. The walls were of bluish

granite, the windows protected by Venetian blinds, which, drawn down during the heat of the day, kept the rooms cool and fresh; the floors were paved with brick, the stiff-backed, rush-bottomed chairs placed neatly against the wall, and the whole house a model of order and cleanliness. In the little parlor their daughter Annunziata awaited them, clad in petticoat of fine red cloth, beautifully wrought; a velvet bodice, embroidered in seed-pearls; and a jacket of bottle-green, bound with gold braid. She rushed forward clasping her hands.

"Madre mia, what have they done to the poor king? Have they killed him?"

"No, my Nunnita; he lives and is well," replied the mother.

"What ideas get into your little mind!" cried the father, laughing boisterously. "The king is well enough, but where's my evening kiss?"

"I forgot, padre," said the girl, stepping forward and laughing lightly—"forgot *you* in my fear for the poor king."

"Hear that, good wife," said the portly citizen, shaking his sides with laughter.

"Hoity toity, what notions have got into the girl's head!"

Annunziata now bustled round, and soon served their evening meal, good substantial fare for the father, and daintier trifles for the women folk. The meal was enlivened by cheerful conversation and pleasant bandying of words. The fond parents gazed admiringly at their daughter's beautiful face; her complexion was very pale and fair, her lips bright red, her features piquant in their slight irregularity, her eyes very large and dark, her hair deep chestnut, confined by a gold ornament. She had a charming face, and an equally charming manner, sprightly and cheerful, gay and animated.

A little treat, of which more hereafter, was devised during the evening meal. On the next day, or that which followed, there was to be a public celebration of the king's concessions to the people; it being, besides, a festival day. It chanced to be remarkably bright and sunny, and the good citizen, Pedro Alvarez, hired a *calesin*, of which the bright-painted sides, adorned with pictures of a bull-fight, flaunted themselves in

the sun, while the mules which drew it shook their long ears in displeasure at their load. Pretty Annunziata fastened her handkerchief of bright-colored silk around her head, and seized her tortoise-shell fan, on which the painted birds were so very large that there seemed to be imminent danger of the whole concern taking flight to the clouds.

She took her seat beside her mother in the low carriage, and her father, placing himself opposite, complacently regarded his maroon smalls, black silk stockings, and dark cloth cloak, which partly concealed the somewhat gaudy lining of the *calesin*, with its fringe of tarnished gold. They drove to the Prado, where every class of Spaniards were represented in the ceaseless stream of human beings that crowded the narrow alleys bordering on either side the broad drive, which stretched between the Puerta d'Alcala and the Carrerra de San Geronimo.

The venders of various confections were hastening hither and thither calling their wares; the water-sellers, in their snuff-colored breeches and jackets, black gaiters, conical hats, and little kegs, wreathed round

with green, slung over their shoulders, plyed their trade, and dealt out clear water to the thirsty multitudes. Ladies, with white or black lace mantillas, caught upon high combs at the back of their heads, and enlivened with a flower or two, walked under the trees, or drove in their bright-colored vehicles; while young gallants, in plumed hats and short velvet cloaks, rode their superb Andalusian chargers, making them curvet and prance, to the delight of the lookers on. As our little party of citizens reached the Puerta del Sol, so conspicuous from its rose-colored façade, adorned with the great round sun, whence it took its name, groups of idlers were, as usual, collected upon the steps, making various remarks about the passers-by. A handsome young gallant not more than twenty years of age was slowly walking his horse in front of the Puerta. His attention was at once arrested by Annunziata's beautiful face. He rode slowly beside the *calesin*, and when it had passed, turned his horse in order to meet it returning.

"So charming a face I have never seen," he said to himself, in a tone of conviction.

"And of the citizen class, too, as I know by her silken head-gear."

The clock in the Puerta struck the hour of five with a deep, vibrating sound, as if it would warn the pleasure-seekers how swift the flight of time. Still the young man rode restlessly about, waiting for another glimpse of the lovely face he admired. Frequently he doffed his hat, adorned with a snow-white ostrich plume, and bowed to his saddle-girths, as he met the carriages of the various court ladies, or returned in a jovial and off-hand manner the greetings of the young cavaliers who passed him on horseback. Occasionally, too, he bent with graceful condescension to acknowledge the salute of some peasant or mechanic, with which class he was a considerable favorite. Just as he reached the Cybele fountain, he again perceived Annunziata, and had leisure to observe her animated face, bright and sparkling with the enjoyment of the day. Unconsciously he stared at her, reflecting, meanwhile, how a lace mantilla would improve her. Meeting his earnest gaze, the girl looked at him for a moment in surprise, then drooped her eyes,

and blushed, nor glanced again at the spot where he stood till their vehicle had passed. By diligent enquiries, the young cavalier, Don Rodrigo Guzman, discovered the fair Annunziata's dwelling, and to the street before her house so frequently repaired that she was fain to notice him. Truth to tell, his was a face and figure that could not well escape the notice of any feminine eyes; and his cloak of mulberry velvet and doublet of lemon-colored satin suited vastly well his dark, Spanish face, shaded by the cavalier's hat. He was usually called, indeed, the handsome Spaniard; so had the merry circle at the court nicknamed him; and Annunziata was fain to smother a sigh now and then, for well she knew the line that divided him from her grade of society. But her eyes were not the only ones upon the premises that quickly discovered the cavalier's frequent visits to their modest portion of the town. Good Josefa readily surmised their import, and in deep perplexity adopted the very wisest course the circumstances permitted, going straight to her lord and master. Worthy Pedro was in no wise perplexed,

but, upon the cavalier's next appearance, boldly approached and addressed him.

"No offence, my lord," he said, with honest bluntness; "but, whatsoever your purpose, I like not your frequent visits to our portion of the town, and the large share of attention you bestow upon our humble abode."

The cavalier looked at him a moment, reddening deeply and drawing himself up somewhat haughtily, but, as if recognizing the citizen's right to question him, replied frankly:

"No offence is taken where none is meant, though at first it did somewhat annoy me that you should thus question my movements."

"Knowing my motives, my lord," said the citizen, "you surely cannot blame me. I have a daughter upon whom I would not that the wind of heaven should blow too freely."

"I do not in truth find fault with you, good sir," said the nobleman. "You have reason to guard her well, for her beauty is most rare."

"As Heaven made her," said Pedro

bluntly ; " but I see in your face that you understand me."

" Perhaps you also see in my face that I am an idiot," said the young lord warmly, " having lost my head, and, I suppose, my heart, over your beautiful daughter."

" This is indeed the height of folly, my lord," said the citizen sternly, " and there is but one remedy—that is, not to see her again; but, above all things, I warn you not to venture to address her."

" You need not warn me," said the lord dejectedly; " I shall not speak to her, Heaven forbid; for what could I say, if I did? But you are right, I am an egregious fool to dog her steps and feed my infatuation by the sight of her face."

" End it at once, like a man, my lord," said Pedro; " I am older than you, and you are only preparing sorrow for yourself."

" Here is my hand upon it," said the cavalier suddenly. " Believe me, I respect your motives and shall take your counsel; but do me a favor. Take this seal, and, if ever you should need me, Rodrigo Guzman will be at your service. Addios."

And the cavalier had vanished before Pedro could reply. He gazed after him a moment.

"A fine fellow," he soliloquized, "and i'faith of a proper figure. There might be mischief there had my little girl met with him. Broken hearts and other fooleries!"

Satisfied with the result of his mission, Pedro went contentedly home, setting Josefa's fears at rest and dismissing the subject from his mind.

Meantime, Don Rodrigo appeared that night at a court *fête*. The scene was most brilliant; the principal families of Spain were there represented; the ladies were fair and gracious, and the cavaliers handsome and courteous. Magnificent robes of velvet, taffeta, and brocade; jewels which caught the light at every turn; coronets sparkling with precious stones; tiaras of pearls and diamonds; circlets for the neck and arms; gold clasps of Genoese workmanship; laces that, in their almost invisible fineness, gave softness to fair faces and white hands—all combined to adorn the scene. Cavaliers, in their doublets and hose of satin and velvet, embroidered in

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PEDRO'S DAUGHTER.

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gold, fairly glittered with the orders of Calatrava, the Golden Fleece, and San Jago de Compostella. When all the goodly company had assembled, the doors were thrown wide open and ushers announced their majesties. Ranged in groups around the hall, the courtiers waited with bowed heads while the king, in full robes of state, entered, preceded by pages and lackeys and gentlemen-in-waiting, and accompanied by the queen in a robe of faint-blue Lyons velvet, embroidered in diamond stars, and an ermine-trimmed mantle of royal purple fastened with a diamond clasp; on her head, sparkling with jewels of immense size and of the first water, was the crown. She was followed by her ladies of honor and by the grand chamberlain. When they had taken their places, the various lords and ladies advanced to offer their homage. Amongst them, bland and courteous, came the *Sieur Harcourt*, paying some graceful compliments to the queen, and passing on to exchange gay badinage with various groups of ladies, with whom he was exceedingly popular. At no great distance from the throne, conversing with

a little knot of men, was a man whose imposing aspect, no less than his dress, made him conspicuous. His eyes were piercing, his forehead high, his glance keen and questioning; his ecclesiastical robe of scarlet, with surplice of fine lace, and the *berretta*, at once suggested his name and dignity—the Cardinal Porto Carrero, Archbishop of Toledo, who held the post once occupied by the great Ximenes, and took so prominent a part in the public affairs of Spain during that important crisis.

Don Rodrigo, handsomer even than usual, but somewhat quieter, approached his sovereigns and bent the knee gracefully, kissing the queen's outstretched hand. She rallied him a little on his sober mood, and jestingly recommended certain remedies from divers fair physicians among the court beauties. Don Rodrigo wittily and happily parried her playful attacks, and passed on to make room for new comers. He followed Harcourt's example, and devoted a few moments to each of the prominent groups, but before the evening was over had fully convinced himself that he had allowed his folly in Annunziata's

regard to carry him too far, and was now in the position of the moth in the fable. Bitterly he repented his indulgence of a fancy which could only dissatisfy him with the scenes and people amongst whom his lot was cast.

However, the *fête* passed off, and morning brought him various occupations. Still he could not shake off the spell cast upon him by the face of an humble *bourgeoise*. But stirring times were at hand. While he was thus bemoaning his fate, and longing for one more glimpse of Annunziata's bright eyes, the king had retired to the Escorial, that mighty palace of the sovereigns of Spain which, with the church attached to it, was founded by Philip II. in accordance with a vow. However, the appearance thereof is not very attractive. It is in the form of a gridiron, in honor of St. Laurence, and in the Doric style of architecture. Its walls are of a yellowish clay color, the whole being surmounted by a dome. The church is fine, adorned with some beautiful specimens of Spanish art, and with the heavily-gilt *retablo*, and rows of austere-looking stalls, usual in ancient

Spanish cathedrals. Thither Charles proceeded, and became gradually worse in mind and body. Seized with a strange, morbid desire to visit the bones of his predecessors, he descended into the Pantheon, or vault under the church, where in niches, lit by funereal lamps, stand the coffins of the dead sovereigns who once ruled the land. He caused each bronze chest to be opened, and gravely and listlessly gazed upon its contents, till, coming to that of his first wife, he uttered a piercing shriek. In all the beauty he had known and loved in life she lay before him, the body having been embalmed.

"She is in heaven, and I shall soon be with her," cried he, rushing out of the vault, with drops of sweat, like the mildew on the walls, standing out upon his forehead. It was soon found that the Escorial proved no more beneficial to his failing health than the palace in Madrid; hence he was removed to the gardens of Aranjuez, hoping in their tranquil delights to restore his jaded spirit. The royal residence there was a white and red building, of a light French style of architecture, and

of which the principal charm lay in the luxuriance of the surroundings, watered by the Tagus, that beautiful river, crossed at this point by a bridge, said in the legends of the country to be the same over which passed Godoy, called the Prince of Peace. The palace stood amid a miniature forest of cachuchas, castanets, lemon and orange trees, intermingled with ash, elms, and lindens, which were not, however, indigenous to the soil. Gently-sloping hills rose from the level plains, giving variety to the landscape, and bringing cool airs to lessen the scorching heat of the day. Charles did not, however, improve even in this genial and bracing atmosphere, and, after signing the famous treaty which gave Spain to Philip of Anjou, died one quiet evening, his feeble, indolent existence coming thus early to a close. His body was conveyed to the Escorial and laid out in royal state, while gaping crowds cast wondering looks upon the pinched and prematurely aged features, thin and scant white hair, which made him seem, though scarcely in his prime, an old and feeble man. The curious crowds went out

to speculate upon his successor's coming, crying, "*Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!*"

Perchance it was the air of fair Castile that, hurrying over the plains, bore the words or their import to the court of France. Speedily did the answer come, in the person of Philip, who was shortly after united to the young and beautiful Maria Louisa of Savoy, then in her thirteenth year. Grand were the festivities that succeeded their nuptials, but the fire-brand had been kindled throughout Europe, and Spain was suddenly roused from its dreams of pageants and of court festivals. William of Orange, indeed, was dead, but not before he had urged England to combine with Holland and Austria against France and Spain. Portugal also deserted the cause of Philip, and formed an alliance with the Archduke Charles of Austria. Thus were all the mightiest powers of Europe involved in a fierce and destructive struggle, which was ever afterwards to be known throughout the world as the "War of the Austrian Succession." Spain was at her lowest ebb. Philip, it is true, was popular, from the grave,

gentle affability of his manner; but he lacked the force which this great crisis required. The Queen Dowager openly espoused the cause of Austria and left the court in disgust. England had sent over Marlborough and another general, deservedly great by his military talent and courage, Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough. On the other hand, Louis sent a large army to the aid of his grandson Philip, and at its head was that able soldier, the Duke of Berwick, son of James the Second, a melancholy, disappointed man, with every day-dream vanished but that of military glory.

The Earl of Peterborough signalized his march through Spain by a series of brilliant and astounding victories. Barcelona was taken with a handful of men, solely by the genius and ability of this great general. Fortress after fortress, town after town, city after city yielded to the enemy, and the English leader marched straight upon Madrid. When the capital seemed really in the enemy's hands, the townspeople would have fled thence in affright, but many of them found escape impossi-

ble. The Austrian and English troops guarded every entrance to the town. The palace was besieged. Philip and Maria of Savoy narrowly escaped being made prisoners, their flight being entirely due to the efforts of their faithful nobles, amongst whom was Don Rodrigo Guzman. When his sovereigns were safely out of the town, the young cavalier bethought him of a certain humble home where dwelt a worthy couple with their handsome daughter. Enveloping himself entirely in a dark cloth cloak, and drawing his hat over his eyes, he wended his way by unfrequented streets to the citizen's house. When he appeared at the door Annunziata and her mother uttered a piercing cry, and Pedro, starting to his feet, seemed about to put himself upon the defensive. The visitor removed his hat, and placing his finger upon his lips enjoined silence. Pedro at once recognized and saluted Don Rodrigo, who, after a few courteous, reassuring words to the frightened women, communicated to the citizen a plan by which he hoped to remove them in safety from the city. Pedro

then pointed out to him another occupant of the room, a venerable priest, who, having been somewhat prominently connected with the events of the time, had thought it prudent to seek safety in obscurity. Don Rodrigo at once recognized him as one of the court chaplains, and having greeted him with profound respect, knelt to obtain his blessing. Young nobles of that day had not yet imbibed the pernicious Voltairean spirit, and out of the nobility of their hearts gloried in graceful deference to old age, and above all to the sacred character of the priesthood. The good old man gave him his blessing, and made many affectionate enquiries for the king and queen and other prominent personages of the court. He was informed that they, with the Cardinal Porto Carrero and a few attendants, had escaped to a place of safety. By the providence of God, through the instrumentality of Rodrigo, the little party, accompanied by one or two of the young cavalier's trusty followers, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the guards. But their troubles only commenced when they had left Madrid.

All the surrounding country was in possession of the foe, and no resource remained to them but to wander through unfrequented paths and gloomy forests, till, after many hardships, they reached the mountains of the Sierra Morena; they journeyed through its rugged defiles, beside deep, gloomy gorges and immeasurable precipices, bounded by steep, frowning crags that rose upon the sight like shapes of horror. As they wandered, weary and exhausted, with no hope of rest, they suddenly came to a rudely built hut, which upon examination proved to be deserted. Within was a little open fireplace that, judging from the traces of ashes and cinders, had evidently been frequently in use; a few damp, rickety-looking stools was the only furniture of the cheerless abode, whose walls were considerably impaired by frost and mildew. It certainly did not present a very inviting prospect; but Rodrigo's energy was equal to the occasion. His followers, by his instructions, collected a pile of wood, and after great exertions kindled a cheerful little fire upon the hearth, and having taken

was in possession of a resource rendered through gloomy forests, they reached Morena; they descended defiles, beyond immeasurable steep, frowning like the sight like they wandered, no hope of a rudely built hut proved to be little open fire-places of ashes when frequently looking stools the cheerless considerably improved. It certainly was a prospect; equal to the his instruction, and after cheerful little having taken

every precaution to dry the apartment and make it habitable, it at last presented a moderately comfortable appearance. The untiring cavalier was not, however, satisfied. Leaving the remainder of the party in possession of the hut, he started forth in search of one of those caverns which the soldier, who acted as guide, declared to abound in these regions, and, as fortune would have it, found one not a stone's-throw from the little wooden habitation, having been probably used, as they now intended to use it, for an addition to the hut. Much care was required in examining the cave, lest it should be a den of wild beasts. It was, however, found to be empty; and similar precautions in drying it having been taken, it proved a commodious sleeping-apartment for Pedro, the priest, and Rodrigo, who made very tolerable couches for themselves, such as they had made for the ladies in their hut, out of the saddle-cloths, travelling blankets, and cloaks.

Here also slept those of the soldiers who were not upon guard, and a good fire being constantly kept lighted, they were all very

comfortable and well pleased with the quarters Providence had provided for them. Here they remained in peaceful security for several weeks, Rodrigo waiting for an opportunity to join the standard of the Duke of Berwick. The soldiers frequently made foraging excursions, shooting game when they could, occasionally bringing home upon their sturdy shoulders a huge fat bear, which they cut into slices and roasted at the fire; or if all failed, they descended into the neighboring hamlets to obtain a supply of provisions.

It was a curious sight to see this strangely-assorted party moving about among the dark sierras—the priest with snow-white hair and venerable aspect, the portly citizen in sad-colored doublet and cloak, his worthy wife in her coarse serge, and the graceful figure of their daughter enveloped in her Spanish mantle and hood, at whose side was so often seen that favorite of court circles on whom the sighs of so many high-born maidens had been wasted, and who looked not one whit less handsome in a hunting-suit of bottle-green slashed with scarlet.

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PEDRO'S DAUGHTER.

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In the long evenings they all sat round the blazing fire in the hut telling old legends, of which the priest especially had an abundant store, or making each other's hair stand on end with stories of the mountain brigands who infested forests or ruined castles, or of coiners who pursued their unlawful calling in the bowels of the earth. To add effect to these tales of horror, the winter wind without swept in fierce blasts over the mountains, wrestling with the giant crags, their ancient enemies since the creation of the universe, or shrieking in uncanny gusts around the hut, vainly seeking entrance through its time-worn walls.

During these weeks of familiar intercourse, we cannot vouch that Annunziata's bright eyes were not making still greater havoc in Rodrigo's heart, nor yet that the maiden had not learned to appreciate the goodness, the gentleness, the piety concealed under that handsome and graceful exterior, which had long ago captivated her fancy. Pedro watched the course of things with secret uneasiness, and many a time the worthy citizen shook his head

and sighed if he chanced to perceive the young couple together, as when, for instance, the cavalier assisted Annunziata to prepare their meals, or to lift the pot of boiling water from the fire, all of which was plainly a labor of love for him. At such times Josefa, with a placid resignation, urged her Pedro to remember the all-disposing intervention of Heaven, saying:

"Heaven has a care over all these things, good husband, and our poor judgment cannot penetrate its ways."

To which Pedro readily assented, little suspecting that certain ambitious hopes, of which she herself was perhaps unconscious, were springing up in his worthy helpmate's mind.

Affairs were at this critical juncture when one evening the soldier who had gone down to procure provisions was tracked by a band of disaffected Spaniards and Portugese, and the little party seated at supper in the hut were suddenly disturbed by the sound of approaching feet. Bravely then did Rodrigo and his followers seek to maintain their position. Stationing themselves at the head of the nar-

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row defile, Rodrigo asked of the leader,
who approached by the light of a torch:

"Whom seek ye?"

"Traitors," cried the soldier fiercely.

"There are no traitors here, except it
be yourselves," cried Rodrigo, at the same
time discharging a volley from his cara-
bine, which was a signal for the beginning
of hostilities. Like Leonidas of old, the
little band defended itself against an over-
whelming majority of its foes, till the
enemy, assuming their forces to be consid-
erable, fled in confusion. What was Rod-
rigo's consternation when he then discov-
ered that Pedro was slain, a ball having
pierced his heart. His wife, who had im-
prudently rushed forth to throw herself on
his breast, had been wounded in the left
lung by a bullet, and lay within the hut
stricken unto death, while the padre, after
endeavoring, as best he could, to staunch
her wound, was seeking to revive Annun-
ziata, who had fallen into a death-like
swoon. The girl, however, soon recover-
ed, and devoted herself to the care of her
mother, whose last hours were harrassed
by anxiety for her daughter, whom she

was leaving alone and unprotected. The priest after hearing her confession and preparing her for death, endeavored to console her by dwelling upon the mercy of God, and promising that he himself would watch over her daughter as far as possible. But, alas! he was only less perplexed than herself. How could he foresee what in the casualties of life might hereafter occur? The chill of old age already warned him that his own death could not be far distant, and even for the present Annunziata's position alone amongst a number of men would be most painful and embarrassing. Hence he found it difficult to administer any solid consolation to his dying penitent, whose touching complaint still rang in his ears:

"God forgive me, but, O padre! I cannot die in peace. Who, who shall be my child's protector?"

"God," replied the priest, pointing solemnly upwards, as he saw the gray shadow of speedy dissolution creeping over her face.

"And I, under God," said Rodrigo, who had entered suddenly, and who stood

with folded arms gazing at the dying woman.

"*You?*" said the priest in amazement, while Josefa, whose faculties were already chilled by death, fixed her eyes upon him wonderingly. A struggle had been going on for some moments in the young cavalier's breast. Pride and some voices from the old brilliant life at the Spanish court were calling on him to draw back before it was too late. On the other hand, the dying woman's anxiety for her daughter, the presence of death, which showed him the worthlessness of earthly honor, the consideration that to him, a homeless wanderer, rank, was of little import, the innate chivalry of his soul, which urged him to deliver the poor girl from her embarrassing position, and, more than all, his great, strong love for Annunziata, drowned the voice of pride, which had spoken very loudly in his soul, all the old prejudices of a long line of hidalgos welling up within him; but they melted like the mists at dawn, and he answered firmly and unhesitatingly:

"Father, the need is very great, time

presses; wherefore I pray you, before this good soul departs to the presence of her God, unite Annunziata to me in marriage, and once having the right to protect her, none shall dare gainsay it."

The priest could scarcely believe his ears; the heir of that proud race desiring to wed a *bourgeoise*! but he knew the young man's truth and honor, and rejoiced. Josefa, too, raised her hands and eyes to heaven in thanksgiving, the shadow on her face rendering it most solemn.

Annunziata was summoned. Don Rodrigo took her hand, asking her to trust him implicitly, and henceforth regard him as her dearest friend and only protector, explaining to her the hasty ceremony which the occasion demanded. The girl stood as one struck by a thunderbolt; her father dead, her mother dying, and, face to face with this overpowering sorrow, a great happiness to which her wildest hopes had never pointed. But just then she was too bewildered to understand it in its true light, and, covering her face with her hands, as if to collect her thoughts, she stood silent and motionless. But Don Rodrigo

urged upon her the great reason for haste. The priest, too, uttered words of advice and encouragement, and the mother wept for joy, and in broken words expressed her gratitude and delight at Don Rodrigo's generosity.

"But *you*," asked Annunziata in a low, troubled voice, "are you to bind yourself to me for ever through pity? I will not allow it. I will rather seek the foe and ask for mercy. Are you to blight your whole life by your generosity?"

"Annunziata dearest," said the cavalier softly, "some time I will tell you how little generosity there is in this action. It springs from a feeling that awoke within me that sunny day upon the Prado. I will not ask you to guess what I mean, but never name pity again where love would be the only appropriate word."

Annunziata looked at him for a moment, as if reading his very soul, and he went on:

"But is the sacrifice too great to ask of you? If so, I shall try and devise some other means for your protection. Only, I beg of you, reflect, and if you love me ever so little, try to consent, for it will be the

best means of ensuring your future, as well as your present, welfare."

He managed to satisfy himself upon this point, and when she had really consented, led her over to her mother's bedside, and there they knelt down.

"Your blessing, mother," cried Annunziata, choking back a sob.

The mother turned her stiffening features towards them, and murmured the words of benediction with her failing breath.

"Here I swear," cried the cavalier solemnly, "in the presence of Heaven, to be faithful to the trust God has given me to-day as long as he vouchsafes me the power."

Then the soldiers were called in to witness the marriage contract in that solemn chamber of death, away from all human associations, among the mighty peaks and glaciers of a vast mountain range, far above the level of the earth, where the shrieking storm-winds howled their loudest. The fire on the hearth burned low, the dim light of the candle fell on the rigid face and figure of the dead Pedro, on the pinched features of the dying Josefa, on whom

death's messengers were setting the seal of mortality. The priest stood vested with surplice and stole, Rodrigo and Annunziata before him, with faces deathly pale from the solemnity of the moment. The mother's wedding-ring was used, the marriage ceremony speedily performed, and as the priest pronounced them man and wife till death did them part, the mother, supporting herself upon the pillow, raised her hand for a last benediction, and fell back dead; the bars of the prison-house had burst, and the immortal soul was free. The fire burned down so low that it almost seemed extinguished, and at the moment the door was burst open and a fierce blast swept through the hut. The candle flickered and went out, the fire leaped into a blaze, and by the light of a torch held in the leader's hand the inmates of the hut recognized the enemy, who had noiselessly surrounded the hut, and, attracted by the curious ceremony within, had stood gazing in at the little window till its conclusion. By the same lurid glare the enemy discovered the presence of the dead, and involuntarily removed their hats.

"More witnesses to our marriage contract," said Don Rodrigo with a melancholy smile. "Are ye come, good sirs, to celebrate our wedding?"

"We have come," said the leader of the band, "to arrest the traitorous nobleman Rodrigo Guzman in the name of Charles the Third. If you are he, give up your sword."

"I will not here dispute Duke Charles's claim to the title you give him," said Rodrigo, unbuckling his sword, "and I think there is none to dispute the latter half of the title you have given me. There is my sword, sir; it used to be deemed a good one."

Hilt first he gave it to the officer, and begged an instant's grace to say farewell. He held his wife a moment in his arms, then shook hands warmly with the padre.

"Behold, good father," he said, "another instance of human foresight; the protector is himself helpless."

"Another one remains," replied the priest, "the first and best—God."

One more duty remained. Reverently the young man bent the knee in a hurried

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prayer for the dead, and, turning to the soldiers, declared himself at their service. The warrant did not permit his wife to accompany him, nor did not include the padre or the attendants in the order of arrest. After he had departed, Annunziata checked her grief with wonderful fortitude, and assisted in paying the last rites to the dead, who were buried side by side in a corner of the cavern, where a rude wooden cross was placed to point out their graves. Then Annunziata, bidding farewell to the old priest, to the rough but kindly soldiers, who had been a part of their lives during the past eventful weeks, departed alone, wearing the disguise of an Andalusian peasant. Journeying by isolated paths, she wended her way towards Madrid, where she gained admittance as a vender of fruit, and, currying favor with guards, found her way into the presence of the English general, whom current report had highly lauded for his acts of benevolence.

Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, was then in the full pride of manhood. Handsome, brave, and chivalrous to the last degree, he had won the epithet of the

"last of the knight-errants" from his constant craving for adventure.

When Annunziata was ushered into his presence he was sitting in a large easy chair, amusing himself by attempting a pen portrait of the beautiful Duchess of Popoli, whose life he had saved at the taking of Barcelona. The portrait was intended for a friend in England. When Annunziata entered he looked up in surprise, but she threw herself at his feet crying: "Pardon, great general, pardon!"

"Pardon for whom, fairest of petitioners?" said the earl. "I beg you to arise."

And so saying, he raised her gently.

"Do not be afraid, child," he continued; "tell me your story. Is it father, or brother, or perhaps some boy-lover for whom you have come to plead?"

The color mounted a little to her face as she answered:

"I have come, my lord, to beg you to set free my husband."

"Your husband, child?" said the general in astonishment. "Why, I should not have supposed you were married. But what is his name?"

"Don Rodrigo Guzman," she replied promptly.

"Ah!" said Lord Peterborough, glancing at her sharply, "that is an affair of different color. So the peasant's dress, as I suspected, is not your natural garb. I am sorry, but your husband, it seems, is accused of grave offences."

"Fidelity to his sovereigns, my lord," said Anpunziata, flushing warmly, "love of his country, and generosity to the unfortunate—these are his only crimes."

"He has a most lovely pleader," said the earl courteously, "and is so far fortunate. But he has not been brought into Madrid as yet, and I doubt if I have the power to assist you in procuring his release."

"Save him, save him!" cried the girl, clasping her hands in her ardor, as she proceeded to pour out the story of Rodrigo's generosity into the earl's sympathetic ear. It was a tale that powerfully appealed to the reckless nobility and chivalrous instincts of the great leader, and was not without its effect upon him, when united with the loveliness of the narrator, for

Peterborough was never known to remain insensible to the power of beauty.

"A knightly deed, upon the honor of a soldier," he said, striking the hilt of his sword. "If my influence be worth anything here, this young cavalier shall be saved, and moreover, I hope when this unlucky war is over, to have an opportunity of meeting face to face a Spaniard capable of such an act."

Peterborough then called an orderly and gave the necessary commands, after which he rose, and himself conducted Annunziata to the door of the apartment.

"Pardon our rough soldier ways, fair lady," he said gallantly; "and if that brave little heart, which dared so much to save your husband, has a prayer or a thought to spare, give it to Charles Mordaunt of Peterborough, of whom I dare say," he added with a half sigh, "you will hear many a sad tale, for, truth to tell, I fear there is little of the saint about him, and that little no one will take the trouble to repeat."

Gratefully Annunziata bid him farewell; and long after, when fate was hard

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upon the gallant earl, and he had returned, after years of wandering, to his native England, she dropped a quiet tear at his undeserved misfortunes.

But Providence had not, after all, decreed that Rodrigo should owe his escape to the generous Englishman. Gold, which was all-powerful with the wild guerilla warriors who had captured him, easily tempted one of them to set him free. Driven by necessity and the fear of being recaptured, he spent the night succeeding his release in a gipsy encampment, where the uncouth Bohemians stared at him with all their might and chatted in an unknown tongue, but, nevertheless, willingly offered him a share of their rude repast.

Meantime Annunziata, having passed without the walls of Madrid, was filled with fear and uneasiness. When the general had sent his orders for Rodrigo's release, he also promised to apprise him of the place where he should join Annunziata. But how was she to reach it, already exhausted and worn out by fatigue and excitement? After wandering a whole day, she came to a little hamlet, to the wretched

inn of which she directed her steps in hopes of obtaining food. Its humble parlor was occupied by two or three rough-looking men, clinking their glasses and throwing dice, all of whom greeted her by a boisterous shout.

"There's a jaunty little *manola*," cried one, whose voice was hoarse and husky from his deep potations.

"Trips as light as a *cachuca* girl," shouted another. "Come over, pretty one, and tell us whence you come."

Annunziata trembled and made no reply, but addressed herself to the landlord, as jolly and red-nosed as most of his class, asking for food.

"No food you shall have," said the reveller, bringing his fist down upon the table and making the glasses ring, "till you answer my questions."

"Now, now, gentlemen," cried the landlord, "consider the peaceful character of my house, where such brawls are unknown. I pray you desist."

"Good vintner, attend to your wares," said the man in the same unsteady voice.

"I say, sweetheart, are you deaf?"

"Take that for your insolence, master winebibber," said a young cavalier who entered at the moment, dealing him a blow with the flat part of his sword. "Go your way, for a poltroon, who is not ashamed to frighten women."

The man seemed on the point of resenting the words and the blow, and his comrades rose to their feet; but, seeing the determined aspect of the cavalier, still holding his drawn sword in his hand, they slunk out, one by one, scowling at him as they passed. Rodrigo then put up his blade, and turned to reassure the supposed stranger, when Annunziata, venturing at last to recognize her husband, ran over to where he stood, laying her hand on his arm with a childish and most natural movement.

"My own Nunnita," he cried in surprise and delight, "what good fortune brought me hither, and how is it you are here? Did I not leave you in the mountain hut?"

"Whence," she said a little shyly, "I have been to Madrid, and begged the English general to set you free. I told him

how good you were, and he promised, but this is not where he spoke of sending you."

"No; because I had probably escaped before his order of release arrived, and it is as well, for I should then have been upon parole. But what did you do next, bravest of little wives?"

"When I was outside the city's gates, it seemed so far to where he told me to meet you, and I had no money, so I wept; and then I wandered on and on till I came here."

"Where the hand of God has surely brought me," said Rodrigo, deeply touched by her simple narrative.

Thus reunited with his wife, he brought her to a place of security near the camp of the Duke of Berwick, where he was again obliged to leave her occasionally, when military duty required his presence in the camp. One evening the duke had assembled his officers in council, when a veiled maiden suddenly entered, and stood before him.

"Whom seek you," asked the duke sternly, "and wherefore do you thus enter our presence?"

"I seek Don Rodrigo Guzman," she answered timidly.

"Unveil, then, that we may see who speaks," said the duke in the same cold tone.

Reluctantly she threw back her veil, and a murmur of admiration went through the assembly, mingled with some openly-expressed remarks upon her personal appearance, which the duke checked by a glance. As he was about to question her more closely, Don Rodrigo entered.

"How now, my Lord Guzman," said the duke sternly, "what mean such unseemly messengers?"

Before he could answer, Annunziata, seeing her husband, flew to his side, and whispered :

"Fly, beloved, there is danger."

"You interrupted me, girl," said the duke still more sternly. "I pray you let me be heard."

Meanwhile the officers looked on in surprise, the duke in evident disapproval, till Rodrigo, drawing Annunziata's arm within his own, drew himself up slightly as he said :

"Before we proceed, your grace and gentlemen, let me present my wife, who, it seems, has come to warn me of impending danger."

Much surprise was manifested, enquiring whispers passed from mouth to mouth, but the duke with stately courtesy saluted her, touched her forehead with his lips, and gave her the place of honor beside him. Then Annunziata warned them of danger. A large force under the Prince of Hesse was advancing, and but for this timely information the camp would have been surprised and the forces probably slaughtered. Loud was the applause of the heroic action of the girl, who had come some miles on foot to save the army. Even the melancholy duke smiled upon her, and when the danger was passed and an important victory gained through her means, listened with much interest to the story of her romantic marriage and her subsequent brave effort for her husband's freedom. The simple narrative strangely moved this stern and reticent man, striking some chord long silent in his heart, and which now vibrated to the touch as, perchance,

it had done in days when fortune seemed to smile upon him, and the highest offices and proudest positions in England had been at his command. Life had proved one long disappointment; the years had dealt hardly with him; glory was now his mistress, the laurel wreath upon his brow his only pride. But throughout Spain and France he was regarded as a man of unsullied honor, of stern integrity, of unrelenting justice, and of unstained reputation.

And here we leave him, having dwelt but a moment on the two great leaders in whose subsequent history so marked a change was speedily produced. The gallant, warm-hearted Earl of Peterborough, as esteemed for bravery as for knowledge, for wit as for learning, for great generalship as for magnanimity, provoked the jealousy of his associates in Spain, and especially that of the Archduke Charles, and, as we have before hinted, was recalled in disgrace to England, though he had in reality done more for the Austrian cause than almost any other leader. He seemed to have bequeathed his good for-

tune to Berwick, who now gained a series of rapid, decisive victories, supported by the peasantry, who had arisen at the last moment and succeeded in restoring Philip to the capital, where we leave him and Spain, being unable to follow that unhappy country through the further mazes of this long war. We shall take one more glance at our hero and heroine, who thenceforth resided in Madrid, happy in each other's society, often dwelling with grateful hearts upon their narrow escape from death, and recalling their marriage in that early dawn, when the fire burned low upon the hearth, the bride's dead father lay a solemn witness to the contract, a dying mother blessed their union with her failing breath, and their very enemies attested it within that humble hut among the giant crags and rugged defiles of the Sierra Morena. Frequently did the good padre who had united them drop in to chat over the past, and, rubbing his hands softly together, declare he was instrumental in their present happiness. Often did the young couple visit the little granite house in the quiet street, and more often still repair to pray

beside a costly tomb in the cemetery of Madrid. It bore the names of two who had slept side by side for many a month upon the snow-whitened summit of the mountain, little recking that a simple cross had been their only monument. So pious and exemplary were the lives of Don Rodrigo and his lovely wife, that neighbors, pointing to them, held them up as models, while the fame of their romantic lives caused them to be looked upon with interest, and spoken of as the noble and his *bourgeoise* wife, whom he had married among the storm-swept peaks of the Sierra Morena.

THE END.



